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THE KING'S BOOK OF SPORTS.

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THE

KING'S BOOK OF SPORTS.

A HISTORY OF THE DECLARATIONS OF KING JAMES I. AND KING CHARLES I. AS TO THE USE OF LAWFUL SPORTS ON SUNDAYS.

WITH

A REPRINT OF THE DECLARATIONS AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE SPORTS THEN POPULAR.

BY

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NOTE.—The 'Book of Sports' is to be found reprinted in the 'Harleian Miscellany' and in vol. i. of the 'Phœnix,' and in Cardwell's 'Documentary Annals of the Reformed Church of England.' A defence of the book was published in 1708, entitled 'A brief Defence of the several Declarations of King James I. and King Charles I. against the cavils of Puritans and phanatics,' besides the reprint of 1709 on page 109 below. It has also been re-edited twice by Mr. Quaritch, in the years 1817 and 1862.

THE KING'S BOOK OF SPORTS.

CHAPTER I.

KING JAMES I.

MOST people, although thoroughly familiar with the title of 'The King's Book of Sports,' know little more about it than that it was published by James I. or Charles I., and it is not unfrequently supposed to contain definitions or descriptions of all the principal amusements of the day. We shall, therefore, commence by stating that it is neither more nor less than a royal proclamation, issued first by James I. in 1618, and afterwards reissued by Charles I. in 1633, under the conditions we shall presently narrate, and that it was intended to authorize the use of certain sports on Sundays, after evening service.

The origin of the 'Book' is best understood by examining the character and previous career of its real author, the former monarch.

James I. of England and the VI. of Scotland was the son of a Queen whose fate is the most tragic that even the romantic history of Scotland can show, and he inherited from her that fatal want of tact which was, in turn, to prove the ruin of his own royal son. He was born in June, 1566, at Edinburgh Castle, a few months after the murder of the unfortunate Rizzio, and was the only child of Mary and Henry, Lord Darnley.

Soon after his birth his captive mother was compelled to abdicate the throne, and James was crowned King at Stirling on July 29, 1567. The murder of the regent Murray, in 1570, was soon followed by the regency of Morton, the leader of the opposition to the Church party, which he bitterly persecuted. The success of the nobles opposed to Morton made James nominally King of Scotland, and in 1581 Morton suffered death for his share in the murder of Darnley. James had been compelled from the first to assume an attitude hostile to his mother, whom he was unable to trust, and when she was judicially murdered, in 1587, by Elizabeth, after twenty years' imprisonment, her removal was, in spite of its horror and disgrace, on the whole a relief to him. The education of the young King had been intrusted to

Buchanan, a man of learning and a strong disciplinarian, whose floggings were so severe that, many years later, James never could endure the presence of a certain courtier, who reminded him too strongly of his ancient master. Buchanan, when reproached one day for having made nothing better than a pedant of the King, answered that it was the best that could be made of him.

James was at such enmity with the Scottish clergy that they even refused his request that they should pray for his mother when her death was imminent. They, indeed, had done little to earn kindness from him; he had been denounced by many of them as a 'madman,' a 'hypocrite,' and a 'reprobate King,' and treated to other similar flowers of the rhetoric of the time; and the Earl of Gowrie, 'the darling hope of the Presbyterian party,' actually entrapped him into his castle, in order to murder him.* The dealings between James and the Scotch Presbyterian clergy may be briefly described as a long duel, which only terminated by his death, to be renewed by his successor on the throne. The abuse which was lavished on him he returned in the same style, in such terms as 'lownes, smaiks, seditious knaves, and so forth.'† The quarrel, which, according to a statement in a letter written by Charles I., was fought by James on

* Buckle's 'History of Civilization.'
† A passage quoted by Buckle.

account of his conviction that Presbyterianism and royal government could not live together without 'perpetual rebellions,' that is to say, was waged by *him* on account of political motives, was maintained by the Presbyterians on religious grounds, and it continued, with varying success, till the death of Elizabeth. Till that event occurred, in spite of a partial success, obtained by armed force, by menaces, and by imprisonment of the most energetic of the clergy, James's poverty prevented him from obtaining a complete mastery over his opponents. During all these years he had buoyed up his mind with promises of the revenge he would enjoy when he once became King of England. The central object of all his ambitions was the building up of the royal prerogative, and when he ascended the throne of England he at once set about this work with an obstinate and domineering spirit intensified by many years of quarrelling with his own fellow-countrymen.

This scheme divided itself into two branches: firstly, a disastrous attempt to force Episcopacy on the Scotch, and, secondly, a consistent endeavour to suppress all unpleasant freedom of speech in the English Parliament.

The Catholics and the Puritans both wished to make him their tool, and he dreaded both with good reason; the Gunpowder Plot may serve to prove the one, and the fate of Charles I. the other.

By his policy he managed to estrange nearly every party in the State. He dissolved one Parliament, in 1611, on the strength of a quarrel about taxation, and prevented the next (thence nick-named the 'Addled Parliament') from doing any real business. From this he merely drew the satisfactory conclusion that he had 'broken the necks of two Parliaments;' and his next venture was to try and do without one, and to live on benevolences, monopolies, and the sale of peerages, by which he sowed a fine whirlwind for his luckless heir to reap. By his attitude at the Hampton Court Conference he separated himself from the Puritans for ever, and threw in his lot with the Church of England, for the ceremonies of which he formerly had so little liking that he once observed, in a speech to the Scottish General Assembly, that 'as for their neighbour Kirk of England, it was an ill-said Mass in English, wanting nothing of the Mass but the liftings.'

His distrust of the conflicting parties of the Catholics and the Protestants made him flatter both by turns, without winning the affections of either; while, basing his policy on the principle 'No Bishop, no King,' he steadily supported a Church whose ministers were never slow to obey his authority.

The royal prerogative was constantly exercised by the issue of Declarations as to the King's will

regarding many and most various subjects, but generally of not quite first-rate importance in the State. As an instance of an ordinary decree of the kind that James best loved, we may mention one of the year 1620, which forbade any discourse of State affairs either at home or abroad, 'which were no fit themes or subjects for vulgar persons or Common meetings.' The next year, when the Commons presented to him a petition against popery, he used the same tone in a letter to the Speaker, saying such subjects were 'far above their reach and capacity.' Such were also questions relating to peace and war, and to the marriage of the heir-apparent and many others.

In the same year was issued one of his miscellaneous proclamations, designed to reform miscarriages of ministers in Chancery, licensing pedlars, monopolies of tobacco-pipe manufacturers, card-making, and several other injustices, which show the wide extent of the prerogative in practice, whatever its principles may be held to have been at that time. After the Hampton Court Conference, he ordered the Book of Common Prayer to be reprinted with amendments, and prefixed a proclamation ordering uniformity.

In James's personal character, vanity and cowardice ran a close race; though vanity, as its way is, was the most conspicuous. One day, brought to a solitary island on the coast of Fife to

admire a fine view, he shouted 'Treason!' like a child, till he was taken home in safety. Another day he broke up a feast with cries of 'Poison!' because a strange fish was served at dinner, and he was again thrown into a great state of terror, in London, when the students of Gray's Inn celebrated a holiday with the firing of a few cannon-shots.

In his hands the magnificence of Elizabeth sank into such extravagance that the courtiers had to waste their substance in adorning their persons with 'barbaric pearls and gold'; and in this none excelled the favourite Buckingham, who on one occasion managed to decorate his handsome person with jewels to the value of £80,000!

The King's own dress and personal appearance are thus described in Dalzell's 'Sketches of Scottish History': 'He was of middle stature, more corpulent through his clothes than in his body, yet fat enough.' He wore his clothes padded, it has been said through fear of assassins, but more probably because it was the fashion of the day, a revival of the style adopted early in Elizabeth's reign. Indeed, it was the custom to wear trunk-hose so enormously stuffed out with rags or horse-hair that a scaffold was at one time erected round the inside of the House of Commons to accommodate those members who wore them. A story is told of a man whom the judges accused of wearing

breeches stuffed out contrary to what the law allowed. In self-defence he drew out the following contents: a pair of sheets, 2 tablecloths, 10 napkins, 4 shirts, a brush, glass-comb, nightcaps, and other useful articles—a store which would make some portmanteaus look rather foolish.*

Dalzell's account of King James continues: 'His legs were very weak, having had, as was thought, some foul play in his youth, or rather before he was born, that he was not able to stand at seven years of age.' (The specific employed by the King to cure this malady was to bathe his legs in the warm blood of every stag killed when he went out hunting.) 'That weakness made him ever leaning on other men's shoulders. He would make a great deal too bold with God in his passion, both with cursing and swearing, and a strain higher verging on blasphemy; but would, in his better temper, say he hoped God would not impute them as sins, and lay them to his charge, seeing they proceeded from passion.' Weldon commented pretty severely on his vanity, when he saw him, an elderly man, in a dress 'as green as the grass he trod on, with a feather in his cap and a horn instead of a sword by his side.'

Great as may have been his talents for divinity, he prided himself no less on his skill in statesmanship, or kingcraft as he called it, and in philo-

* Baine's 'Lancashire.'

sophy. The courtiers of the day could not fail to mark the notable parallel between his career and that of Solomon. Like Solomon, he was an only son, a King from early youth, and a lover of trade; like Solomon, he was at once a philosopher, a poet, and a good Churchman. They might have added that, like Solomon, he exhausted his treasury in spite of his peaceful reign, cursed his country with favourites when alive, and left it ripe for revolution at his death.

Dark as are the colours with which we have sketched his character, the picture is not without a brighter side. It cannot be said of him as of his grandson Charles II., that he

> 'Never said a foolish thing,
> And never did a wise one,'

for there is much wisdom both in some of his words and his deeds. He had a high ideal of his office, an excellent thing in a King. In proof of this we will quote some not ignoble lines from a sonnet of his composition, addressed to his son, Prince Henry:

> 'If then ye would enjoy a happie reigne,
> Observe the statutes of our heavenly King;
> And from His law make all your laws to spring;
> Since His lieutenant here ye should remaine.
> Reward the just, be stedfast, true and plaine;
> Represse the proud, maintayning aye the right;
> Walke ever so, as ever in His sight,
> Who guardes the godly, plaguing the prophane.
> And so ye shall in princely virtues shine,
> Resembling right your mightie King divine.'

According to some very fulsome notes, written by Archbishop Laud, on King James, he never took the life of any nobleman. Though this is very near the truth, yet it is impossible to forget that his policy or cowardice made him as clearly guilty of the death of Raleigh as Henry VIII. is of the death of any of his numerous victims. But in keeping the peace both at home and abroad James deserved well of his country.

It was once observed of a certain eminent nobleman that he was a scientific man among Dukes, and a Duke among scientific men. Of James, the author of a legion of works on subjects human and Divine, it may be equally well observed that he was a literary man among Kings, and a King among literary men.

In three great provinces of human activity, James essayed to play a distinguished part, as a theologian, a poet, and a politician; but the wisdom of Solomon was given him in vain; in none can he be said with truth to have succeeded. His divinity and his poetry were not read; and the end of all his kingcraft was his legacy to his son of what has been pithily described as 'an empty purse and a crown of thorns.'

In a speech which is still extant, James has recorded his approval of all lawful amusements for the people, in language similar to that which he employs in the 'Book of Sports.' He proposed the appointment of certain days 'for delighting the

people with public spectacles of honest games and exercise of arms; as also for convening of neighbours for entertaining friendship and heartliness, by honest feasting and merriness.' For he says: 'I cannot see what greater superstition can be in making plays and lawful games in May and good cheer at Christmas, than in eating fish in Lent and upon Fridays, the papists as well using the one as the other; so that always the Sabboths be kept holy, and no unlawful pastime be used."'*

In all manly exercises he himself took the greatest delight; and in his favourite pursuit of hunting he frequently showed the greatest intrepidity, in spite of his natural cowardice, which often drove him, as we have seen, into a perfectly childish state of panic.

His personal timidity was often apparent in his political as well as in his social life, and may be observed in his courageously issuing the 'Book of Sports,' with general directions for its being read, and his speedily withdrawing this order when it became evident that it was unpopular. A witty preacher, struck by this characteristic of the King, began a sermon before him with this text from St. James's General Epistle: 'James First and Sixth—"He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed."'

The two great political events of his time were,

* Somer's Tracts, vol. iii., p. 270.

at home, the development of Parliamentary rule, and, abroad, the establishment of a definite European policy. James's autocratic principles prevented him from understanding the transfer in the balance of power in the State, and this proved to be the ruin of his foreign policy, which was entirely devoted to an alliance with Spain, an impossibility, considering the hatred with which the English and the Spaniards, not without reason, regarded one another.

This blindness is the more strange when we observe the sagacity with which he commented on many of the most important events of his time. He deplored in prophetic terms the elevation of Laud to the bishopric of St. David's.* He warned Buckingham, when he pressed for the impeachment of the Earl of Middlesex, that he would some day have enough of impeachments, and he gave Charles warnings which might have been equally useful, had they been attended to.

His errors, however, were on the surface; his sins went before him to judgment, and it is certain that his infringements on the rights of his subjects were tempered by a discretion that averted that public hatred which his successor so unhappily lived to evoke.

* His expression was: 'Take him to you, but on my soul you will repent it.'

CHAPTER II.

THE SABBATH AND SUNDAY.

DURING the reign of James I. many of those questions which were afterwards merged in the more exciting controversies of the Civil Wars arose or were reshaped. Among these not the least interesting, then as now, was the problem of how Sunday ought to be observed.

While the Church of Rome had been predominant in this country a freedom had been allowed in Sunday pastimes similar to that which still prevails in those Continental nations which are still subject to her influence. It is certain that this liberty was not uncommonly greatly abused, and that recreations on Sundays, as well as on other festivals, such as Whitsun, or other Ales and Wakes, as they were called, commemorating the dedication of churches, frequently became the scenes of riot and debauchery. In earlier times, prior to the

dissolution of the feudal system, the only occasions on which the poorer classes could meet were when some military necessity called them together under discipline, and in an age when the poor man was a villein, who might be attached to the soil as a chattel, and go to any purchaser of it as such, formal gatherings of the people for recreation were unthought of and impossible. But with the increase of freedom regular amusements became both possible and necessary, and while the rich had their tournaments, jousts, and other costly shows, such as the 'revels, mocks, disguisings and bankets roiall' with which we learn from Stow that King Henry VIII. kept his Christmas at Greenwich in 1527, the poor had other enjoyments after their kind both lawful and unlawful, such as baiting of bears, bulls, and badgers, cock-fighting, Morrice-dancing, leaping, and archery, and last, but not least, the Maypole and all the games connected with its traditions.

The poorer classes, though they could not afford hunting and banqueting, were nevertheless not less hospitable and fond of enjoyment in their degree than their masters. They contrived to entertain one another with good cheer in their humbler way, 'especiallie at bridales, purifications of women, and such odd meetings, where it is incredible to tell what meat is consumed and spent, each one bringing such a dish, or so many, with him, as his

wife and he doo consult upon, but alwaies with this consideration, that the léefr (dearer) freend shall have the better provision. This also is commonlie seene at their bankets, that the good man of the house is not charged with anything saving bread, drink, sauce, houseroome, and fire. But the artificers in cities and good townes deal far otherwise, for albeit that some of them doo suffer their jaws to go before their clawes, and divers of them making good cheer do hinder themselves and other men—yet the wiser sort can handle the matter well enough in these junketings, and therefore their frugalitie deserveth commendation. Both the artificer and the husbandman are sufficiently liberall and verie friendly at their tables and when they meete; they are so merry without malice, and plaine without inward Italian or French craft and subtiltie, that it would doo a man good to be in companie among them.'*

For the ideal side of the 'unreproved pleasures' of these times we can ask no better descriptions than we have from Milton:

'Sometimes with secure delight
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the cheker'd shade;
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holy-day.'

* Harrison's 'Description of Britain.'

While for richer men there were the 'throngs of knights and barons bold, and the

> 'Pomp and feast and revelry
> With mask and antique pageantry;
> Such sights as youthful poets dream
> On summer eves by haunted stream.'

There is no doubt that before the rise of Puritanism the poor had for some generations kept holiday on Sunday, and generally celebrated on that day the festivals that fell on the subsequent week-days.

We learn from the Somers Tracts that the marriage of Frederick the Prince Palatine with the Princess Elizabeth took place on Sarove Sunday, in 1613, and that the people ended the day with 'dancing, masking, and revelling,' according to the custom of such assemblies.

Sunday was the ordinary day with the Court, as we shall see, for masks and plays, as also for meetings of the Privy Council. The custom of exhibiting plays on Sunday is probably due to the religious character of so many of the early plays.

Previous to the rise of Puritanism the first day of the week had been always called either Sunday or the Lord's Day,* and the Sabbath meant Saturday, as in France and Italy, where Samedi and Sabbato are modifications of the word Sabbath,

* 'Notes and Queries,' July 21, 1855.

used for the seventh day.* The date when the term came to be used in England for the first day of the week is fixed approximately by Disraeli the elder as 1554.†

The account in Exodus xvi. 23 of the institution of the Sabbath by Moses, owing to a mistranslation, is sometimes believed to refer to an earlier command, instead of being the institution of a new one. The words 'To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord' should be 'a holy Sabbath,' and merely indicate that the people are to rest on that day;‡ the article is correct in verse 25.

The word 'Sabbath' is nowhere found in the Book of Genesis, and, indeed, the view that Moses originated the keeping of the Sabbath is explicitly stated in Nehemiah ix. 14. 'Thou . . . madest known unto them Thy holy Sabbath, and commandest them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.'

There is nowhere in the New Testament any direct command as to the observance of the Sabbath, and the teachings of Christ with relation to it are entirely directed to the abolition of a rigid formalism in it, while St. Paul (Colossians xi.,

* *Notes and Queries*, July 21, 1855.

† Disraeli, 'Comms.,' vol. ii., ch. xv. and xvi. In the Journals of the House of Lords, proceedings on Saturday are still headed 'Dies Sabbati.'

‡ 'Horæ Sabbaticæ,' Godfrey Higgins.

verses 16, 17), mentions Sabbaths with new moons and other feast days, 'which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is Christ.' St. Paul and St. Luke call the day simply 'the first day of the week.' The general body of the early Christian Church, with the exception of the Judaizing Christians, kept the first day of the week, probably as being the day of the Resurrection, and treated the Sabbath as no longer binding on them, though there is no record of the Apostles having observed Sunday in any special way. But ever since the first establishment of Christianity in Rome as the ruling authority in the State with regard to matters of morality, the observance of a more or less degree of rest on Sunday has been commanded in most Christian countries.

In the year 321 A.D. Constantine, who observed Saturday and Sunday in just the same way,* issued the following decree: 'On the venerable day of the Sun let all the magistrates and people residing in the cities rest, and let all the workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their labour, because it often happens that another day is not so suitable for grain-growing or vine-planting —lest, by neglecting the proper moment for such operations, the bounty of heaven be lost.' Similarly, later Emperors had forbidden shows and

* Disraeli, 'Comms.'

spectacles, and military exercises, on Sundays. It was not till the sixth century that the confusion between Sunday and Sabbath really attained importance.

In France the Frank Emperors had enforced the observance of Sunday by severe penalties, for example, Charlemagne in his capitularies; and many of the later phases of Sabbatarianism were anticipated even at this early date.

In England the Anglo-Saxon Kings as early as, and even earlier than Alfred, had passed laws enjoining a Sunday rest. These were extended by their successors, and Richard II., in 1388, forbade servants and labourers to play at tennis and other games on Sunday, with the exception that archery was always to be lawful.

In the earlier part of James I.'s reign 'lawful bodily labour' was prohibited on that day, except in such cases of necessity as harvest times.

About this time, however, arose in England, among those of a Puritan tendency, the doctrine that the Christian Sunday ought to be observed in the same way as the Jewish Sabbath, and even, as some held, Saturday should be observed, and not Sunday.

This theory, doubtless fostered by the intense study of the Old Testament, which was then so common, was taken up by a number of energetic preachers, and soon produced a powerful effect

upon society, chiefly among the middle and lower classes.

Dr. Hessey* notes that Shakespeare always makes Christians use the word 'Sunday' for the first day of the week; *e.g.*, 'Shipwrights, whose sore task does not divide the Sunday from the week' ('Hamlet,' I. i.); 'sigh away Sundays' ('Much Ado,' I. i.); and 'velvet guards and Sunday citizens' ('1 King Henry IV.,' III. i.); while Shylock is correctly represented as swearing 'by our holy Sabbath' ('Merchant of Venice,' IV. i.).

There is, however, one instance where a Christian speaks of Sunday as the Sabbath, *i.e.*, Hastings, in 'King Richard III.,' III. ii., says to the priest, 'Come the next Sabbath.'

In the book of Homilies Sunday is described, with a caution bordering on ambiguity, as 'the Christian Sabbath.'

At the trial of Archbishop Laud, among the charges brought against him, Art. 25 averred that he 'held that Sunday is no Sabbath.'†

The Sabbatarian doctrine, so fruitful of consequences in England, and thence destined to spread to Scotland, to Holland, and to America, was repudiated by almost all the great reformers of the Continent. Luther on this point said: 'If anyone sets up the observance of Sunday upon a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride

* Sunday, Bampton Lecture. † 'Cant. Doom.,' p. 222.

on it, to dance on it, to feast on it.' A clergyman staying with Luther's intimate friend, the Elector of Hesse, expressed his surprise at the Elector asking him to go to the play with him on that day, but finally consented, thinking he should know best.* Similar in effect were the sentiments of Calvin, Melancthon, Zwingli, and Cranmer.

The great instrument by which the Sabbatarian views obtained such prevalence in this country, and in Scotland, was the Articles and Catechism of Westminster, drawn up by ninety-eight divines and men of learning ;†—a body which was a fair sample of the erudition of the day. These were, in 1647, adopted as the recognised formularies of the Scottish Kirk, which, until that year, had no rule as to the observance of Sunday. It was the adoption of these Articles that produced the remarkable change which speedily manifested itself in North Britain. So little importance had been attached to the day by the Reformed Church of Geneva, that it had even been proposed to substitute Thursday as the Lord's Day, but the proposal was outvoted.‡ Even in England it had been

* Cox, 'Sabbath Laws.'

† 1643-1646. Milton, though he afterwards changed his mind, called the assembly two years after it sat, select and learned, and said that piety, learning, and prudence were housed there.—Schaff's 'History of the Creeds.' A list of the divines is to be found in Neal, vol. iii., p. 46.

‡ Pocklington's 'Sunday no Sabbath,' quoted by Fuller, Book XI.

held, for instance, by Tyndal, that this might lawfully be done. The Church of Geneva, and the Calvinistic and Lutheran Churches abroad, allowed plays to be acted, operas performed, and other pastimes to be used, on Sundays.*

The Scotch, when the Westminster doctrine reached them, proved even more inflammable than their Southern neighbours. It has been frequently asserted (an error into which the elder Disraeli fell) that Knox was the principal leader in this movement, but there is no lack of evidence to show that he enjoyed a freedom which none of the rigid Puritans allowed. He attended the marriage of James Stewart (afterwards Earl of Murray) on a Sunday, in 1562, and countenanced a display which included a banquet, a masque, dancing, and fireworks, and which was so extravagant that it offended some of the godly, but on that ground only, and not because of the day on which it occurred, as far as our records go. Further, he travelled and wrote letters on Sunday, and even entertained Ambassadors and others.

The severity which has since become so closely associated with the Scottish name had gone so far by the year 1580 that games on Sunday were pretty severely punished. As in England, the most ordinary needs were subjected to penalties, such as the fine of 'fifty-aught shillings,' which is recorded

* Carte's History.

by the surgeons, for what they quaintly call 'barbarising on Sabbeth;' but in both countries it took far longer to force austerity upon villages than upon cities, and festivals of all kinds in the country long survived the denunciations levelled against them.

The history of domestic legislation is often a list of failures, and the previous laws as to observing Sundays and recreation were not singular in this respect.

The effect of an attempt made in England in the year 1527 to prohibit unlawful games is shown us by Stow in his annals in these words: 'In the moneth of May was proclamacion made against all unlawfull games, and commissions awarded into every shire for the execution of the same, so that in all places tables, dice, cardes, and bowles were taken and bremt; but when young men were restrained of these games and pastimes, some fell to drinking, some to ferreting of other men's conies and chasing of deere in parks and other unthriftinesse.'

The following license, granted by Queen Elizabeth, shows that large numbers of people attended Sunday recreations in the earlier part of her reign.

'To all majors, constables and other hed officers within the countie of Middlesex.

'After our hartie recommendations. Whereas we are informed that one John Seconton, Powlter, dwelling within the Parishe of St. Clementes Daines,

being a poore man, havinge foure small children, and fallen into decays, ys lycensed to have and use some playes and games at or uppon nyne severall Sondaies for his better relief, comforte and sustentacion, within the Countie of Middlesex, to commence and begynne at and from the 22nd daie of Maye next, comynge after the date hereof, and not to remayne in one place not above three severall Sondaies, and, we considering that great resorte of people is lyke to come thereunto, we will require you as well for good order, as also for the preservation of the quene's majestie's peace, that you take with you foure or fyve of the discrete and substanciall men within your office or liberties, where the games shal be put in practise, then and there to foresee and doo your endeavor to your best in that behalf duringe the contynuance of the games or playes, which games are hereafter severallie mencyoned; that is to saye, the shotynge with the standerd, the shotynge with the brode arrowe, the shotynge at the twelve skore prick [*i.e.* target] the shotinge at the Turke, the leppinge for men, the runninge for men, the wrastlinge, the throwinge of the sledge, and the pytchinge of the barre, with all such other games as have at any time heretofore, or now be licensed, used, or played. Yeoven the 26th daie of April in the eleventh yere of the quene's majestie's raigne.'*

* Cardwell's 'Documentary Annals.'

With regard to working on Sunday, the injunctions of Queen Elizabeth, in 1559, required that all parsons, vicars and curates shall teach and declare unto the people that they may with a safe and quiet conscience after their common prayer in time of harvest labour upon the holy and festival days, and save that thing which God has sent. And if for any scrupulosity or grudge of conscience they shall abstain from working upon those days, that then they shall grievously displease and offend God.

This special exemption of harvest days indicates that the earlier custom of working after Sunday service had wholly or partially disappeared, having apparently given way to the fascinations of various open-air sports and exercises.

In 1579 Elizabeth issued a High Commission to reform the manners of the people, in consequence of complaints which had reached her ears. The Commission at their sittings, which were held at Manchester, issued orders through the county against 'pipers and minstrels playing, making and frequenting bear-baiting and bull-baiting on the Sabbath days, or upon any other days in time of divine service; and also against superstitious ringing of bells, wakes and common feasts, drunkenness, gaming and other vicious and unprofitable pursuits.'

They also forbade the sale of ale by unlicensed

persons, and ordered that all ale-sellers should sell a full quart for a penny.*

This second attempt seems to have been scarcely more successful than the other, possibly because it was too severe, and forbade not only vicious pursuits, but also amusements so popular and in harmony with the taste of the day as music on Sunday and the common feasts.

Unhappily there had arisen in the minds of the growing party of the Puritans a prejudice against sports, which soon became directed against even their most innocent enjoyment.

A typical Puritan of the severer sort appears in Ben Jonson's play, 'Bartholomew Fair,' which was performed in the fair itself, under the patronage of, and for the purposes of, the Church. This gentleman rejoiced in the name of Zealot of the Land Busy, and described himself as 'One that rejoiceth in his affliction, and sitteth here to prophesy the destruction of fairs and May games, wakes and Whitson ales, and doth sigh and groan for the reformation of these abuses.'

In the words of Heylin, the Puritans 'prevailed so far at last that the annual festivals being turned into days of labour, and the Lord's day wholly taken up in religious duties, there was no time left for lawful recreations amongst the people.'†

* Baines. † 'Cyprianus Anglicus.'

CHAPTER III.

THE DECLARATION, OR 'BOOK OF SPORTS,' OF JAMES I.

THE carelessness and profanity of the Court had caused many serious men to look upon every action of King James with increasing suspicion and dislike, especially any action which tended to increased laxity in the observance of Sunday, or the Sabbath as the Puritans preferred to call it. The King was already looked upon by many as a Sabbath-breaker and an evil-liver. Thus, while on his journey to Scotland he one day asked an aged Scottish divine for his blessing. The answer he got was, 'Pray God bless you, sir, and make you a good man, but He has ill stuff to make it of.'

If sack and sugar be a sin, then James was certainly no small sinner, for drunkenness at Court was common enough, and royalty was sometimes

the most drunken. In 1606 James played the host to Christian, King of Denmark, a great sot, and a masque was to be played representing the Queen of Sheba presenting her gifts to (no doubt the British) Solomon. Monarchs, players and ladies were so hopelessly drunk that the play came to an abrupt termination by the performers (mostly Court ladies) staggering off the stage, after the Queen of Sheba had deluged the British Solomon with wine, jelly, etc., by upsetting her presents all over him.

These considerations will help to explain the bitter opposition provoked by the publication of what has ever since been known as 'The King's Book of Sports.'

The circumstances which gave birth to that declaration, which was hotly disputed at the time when it was issued, and the title of which at any rate is still familiar, are the following :

King James I. was strongly attached to sports, both courtly masquerades and revels, and also open-air exercises, and amongst the latter hunting was his favourite diversion, a fact which Sir Walter Scott made use of in his 'Fortunes of Nigel' in the scene in which the hero of that novel gives his Sovereign such an unnecessary fright, while hunting in Greenwich Park.

The good people of Lancashire were not less fond of amusement than their Sovereign, and were

never slow on a holiday, in the words of a local poet (whose fame we regret to say has been damaged by the course of time, ever *edax rerum*) :

> 'To throw the sledge,
> 'To jump, or leap over ditch, or hedge ;
> To wrastle, play at stoole ball, or to runne,
> To pitch the barre or to shoot of a gunne,
> To play at loggets, nine holes, or ten pinnes,
> To trye it out at football by the shinnes.'

From which it appears, by the way, that hacking at football was even meritorious in those primitive times.

In the year 1617 James paid a visit to Scotland for some months, and while he was passing through Lancashire, on his return to London, 'he received a petition from some servants, labourers, mechanics and other vulgar persons, complaining that they were debarred from dancing, playing, church-ales —in a word, from all recreations on Sundays, after divine service.'

It was thereupon suggested to the King that the Puritans meant to put down such practices as being unlawful or wrong on the Lord's Day.

'This was a sufficient inducement to the King to condemn this Puritanical scruple, and the rather as he was not himself very scrupulous in this point. A book therefore was published in his name, wherein he maintained by several arguments that pastimes on Sundays, after evening service, were allowable, and withal commanded that none

should be hindered or discouraged from any lawful recreations.'* The above statement, though correct, is not the whole truth, for the King first complied with the petition, by granting the desired license to the people of Lancashire only, and the following year, on May 24, 1618, issued his 'Book of Sports,' from his Manor of Greenwich.†

The county of Lancaster was at this time, as it still is, more strongly attached to Roman Catholicism than most other parts of England. It was then, and continued till long afterwards to be, also the most superstitious. Lancashire witches were feared and persecuted as no other witches have been before or since, except perhaps by the Jews in early times. In 1612 eleven of these unhappy women were sentenced to death and executed for their imaginary crimes, and the Judge, Sir Edward Bromley, remarked, in delivering his sentence, that he considered they had taken more pains over them, in giving them a formal trial, than had ever before been shown to persons of their condition. Fortunately the dawn of common-sense was not far off. In 1633 seventeen witches were sentenced to death in the same county, but after an examination of them by Charles I. in person, and several high officials, they all received a free pardon. Bitterly as the Churches fought over their respective creeds,

* Rapin's History.
† Camden's Annals.

they were all orthodox in their belief in witchcraft; the Roman Catholics, who prescribed special penances for converted witches, were not a whit more superstitious than the most precise of the Puritans.

The conflict between these religious parties in Lancashire had been waged with little cessation during the latter half of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the Catholics being alternately coaxed and threatened by the authorities, with a view to their conversion. For example we may quote a letter from Henry, Earl of Derby, to the Privy Council (1592), showing that the Earl had dealt gently with the Lancashire Papists, on purpose only to draw them into a doubtless and secure mind of troubles, and intimating that he expected some round direction of proceedings from their lordships. The sittings of commissions and the informations of traitors were some of the engines in this war, the fortunes of which fluctuated considerably from year to year. Shortly before 1618, certain of the Catholics having conformed to the Church, the county of Lancaster was just then looked upon as a favourable ground for proselytizing by a policy of conciliation, as appears from the Declaration itself.

The comments made by many of the Puritans on James's answer to the petition appear to have stung him a good deal, and to have partly provoked the issue of the Declaration, which was unfortunate,

in that it rather created a fresh disturbance than settled the dispute, as it was doubtless designed to do. On James's journey home from Scotland, after his attempt to establish Episcopacy there, Camden informs us that as the King made his progress through the hunting countries, all the parks and forests in his way were ransacked for his recreation. Being, therefore, in high good-humour, he was the more disposed to look favourably on a request from his subjects to amuse themselves in their own way. A few years before, James apparently thought otherwise on this subject, for in some articles drawn up with the consent of Archbishop Abbot, for the Protestants in Ireland, he had expressly forbidden the use of the 'Sunday Sabbath,' as it was called, for any other purpose than religious exercises.*

The Court travelled at the average rate of twelve miles a day, and part of the programme was touching for the King's evil, at some of the towns on the road, a ceremony which James frankly admitted he had little faith in. In this he was before his age, for this mystic rite lasted till the reign of Queen Anne, and it is said that Dr. Johnson was the last person touched. The private journal of one Nicholas Assheton throws some light on the way in which King James passed his time during his journey homewards, and incidentally refers to his answer to the petition. He tells us that the

* Dean Hook's 'Lives of the Archbishops.'

monarch stayed on the 11th (August, 1617) at Hornby Castle, and travelled by easy stages back to London, hunting every day, one day killing five bucks, another two, and so on, as luck would have it. On the 13th he gave his answer to the petition in what Assheton calls a 'speech,' about 'libertie to pipeing and honest recreations.' Here follows the programme for the following Sunday: 'August 17. Hoghton. Wee served the Lords with biskett, wyne and jellie. The Bishopp of Chester, Dr. Morton [translated to Durham in 1632], preached before the King. To Dinner. About 4 o'clock there was a rush bearing and Pipeing afore the King in the Middle Court. Then to supp. Then, about 10 or 11 o'clock a Maske of Noblemen, Knights, Gentlemen and Courtiers, afore the King, in the middle round in the garden. Some Speeches; of the rest dancing the Huckles, Tom Bedlo and the Cowp Justice of the Peace.'*

James took with him on this journey a regular company of players, and a number of musicians and singing boys, whose presence had very much disgusted the Scotch. The King's sentiments with respect to recreation are to be found in his own words in his work entitled 'Basilicon Doron,' where James, advising his son Henry what sports a young man ought to excel in, while he debars the football as 'meeter for laming than making able,'

* Nichols' 'Progresses of King James I.'

recommends a 'moderate practice of running, leaping, wrestling, fencing, dancing, and playing at the caitch, or tennise, bowles, archerie, pallemalle, and riding, and does not forbid, in foul and stormy weather, cards and tables (*i.e.*, backgammon), dice, chess and billiards'—a fairly Catholic selection. According to a little book called 'The Prince's Cabbala,' somewhat ambiguously described as 'collected by Sir Thomas Overbury, from the Royal mouth, a little before he was poisoned in the Tower,' the King gave his unqualified approval to the outdoor games, qualified to the others, recommending the latter merely as better than idleness.

Games of some kind seemed to have been generally indulged in on Sunday afternoon, from an earlier date than this. In Thomas Cartwright's 'Admonition to Parliament' (1572), we have a somewhat malicious account of what these were. He says: 'The minister posteth it [the service] over as faste as he can gallope; for eyther he hath two places to serve; or else there are some games to be playde in the afternoon, as lying for the whetstone, heathenish dauncing for the ring, a beare or a bull to be baited, or else a jackanapes to ride on horseback, or an interlude to be plaide, and if no place else can be gotten this interlude must be playde in the church.'*

The extension of James's license to the whole of

* Strutt.

England, by the publication of the 'Book of Sports,' was occasioned by a misuse of his informal assent to the petition. Morton, Bishop of Chester, had tried to set a limit to the amusements which the Romanists allowed and encouraged, by forbidding them during time of service on holidays and Sunday afternoons. Certain people now began to annoy churchgoers by loitering round the church doors, dancing and playing during service time, and disturbing the service, coolly alleging, on the strength of the King's favourable response to the petition, that they had the royal warrant for such conduct. How far they were justified in this readers may judge from the text which follows. The King, when he learnt the facts from Morton, expressed his indignation, and the Bishop was directed to censure the ringleader for his misbehaviour.*

'THE KINGES' MAJESTIES DECLARATION CONCERNING LAWFULL SPORTS.

'*By the King.*

'Whereas upon our returne the last yere out of Scotland, we did publish our Pleasure touching the recreations of Our people in those parts under Our hand. For some causes US thereunto mooving, Wee have thought good to command these Our Directions then given in Lancashire with a few

* 'Life of Bishop Morton.'

words thereunto added, and most appliable to these parts of Our Realmes, to bee published to all Our Subjects.

'Whereas wee did justly in Our Progresse through Lancashire, rebuke some Puritanes and precise people, and tooke order that the like unlawfull carridge should not bee used by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and unlawfull punishing of Our good people for using their lawful recreations, and honest exercises, after the afternoon Sermon or Service: Wee now finde that two sorts of people, wherewith that countrey is much infected (Wee meane Papists and Puritanes), have maliciously traduced and calumniated those Our just and honourable proceedings. And, therefore, lest Our reputation might, upon the one side (though innocently), have some aspersion layd upon it, and that, upon the other part, Our good people in that Countrey be misled by the mistaking and misinterpretation of Our meaning: We have, therefore, thought good hereby to cleare and make Our pleasure to be manifested to all Our good People in those parts.

'It is true that at Our first entry to this Crowne, and Kingdome, We were informed, and that too truely, that Our County of Lancashire abounded more in Popish Recusants than any County of England, and thus hath still continued since, to Our great regreet, with little amendment, save that

now of late, in Our last riding through Our said County, Wee find both by the report of the Judges, that there is some amendment now daily beginning, which is no small contentment to Us.

'The report of this growing amendment amongst them, made Us the more sorry, when with Our own eares We heard the general complaint of Our people, that they were debarred from all lawful Recreation, and exercise upon the Sundayes afternoone, after the ending of all Divine Service, which cannot but produce two evils: The one, the hindering of the conversion of many, whom their Priests will take occasion hereby to vexe, persuading that no honest mirth or recreation is lawful or tolerable in Our Religion, which cannot but breed a great discontentment in Our people's hearts, especially of such as are, peradventure, upon the point of turning; The other inconvenience is, that this prohibition barreth the common and meaner sort of people from using such exercises as may make their bodies more able for warre, when Wee, or Our Successors, shall have occasion to use them. And, in place thereof, sets up filthy tiplings and drunkennesse, and breeds a number of idle and discontented speeches in their Ale houses, For when shall the common people have leave to exercise, if not upon the Sundayes and holy daies, seeing they must apply their labour, and win their living in all working daies?

'Our expresse pleasure therefore is, that the lawes of Our Kingdome, and Canons of Our Church be as well observed in that Countie, as in all other places of this Our Kingdome. And on the other part, that no lawfull Recreation shall bee barred to Our good People, which shall not tend to the breach of our aforesayd Lawes, and Canons of our Church: which, to expresse more particularly, Our pleasure is, That the Bishop, and all other inferiour Churchmen, and Churchwardens, shall, for their parts, bee carefull and diligent, both to instruct the ignorant, and convince and reforme them that are misled in Religion, presenting them that will not conform themselves, but obstinately stand out, to our Judges and Justices, Whom We likewise command to put the Law in due execution against them.

'Our pleasure therefore is, That the Bishop of that Diocesse take the like straight order with all the Puritanes and Precisians within the same, either constraining them to conform themselves, or to leave the County according to the Lawes of Our Kingdome, and Canons of our Church, and so to strike equally on both hands, against the contemners of our Authority, and adversaries of Our Church. And as for Our good people's lawfull Recreation, Our pleasure likewise is, That, after the end of Divine Service, Our good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawfull recreation,

Such as dancing, either of men or women, Archery for men, leaping, vaulting, or any other such harmlesse Recreation, nor from having of May Games, Whitson Ales, and Morris-dances, and the setting up of Maypoles, and other sports therewith used, so as the same be had in due and convenient time, without impediment or neglect of Divine Service: And that women shall have leave to carry rushes to the Church for the decoring of it, according to their old custome. But withall we doe here account still as prohibited all unlawfull games to bee used upon Sundayes onely, as Beare and Bullbaitings, Interludes, and at all times, in the meaner sort of people, by Law prohibited, Bowling: And likewise we barre from this benefite and liberty, all such knowne Recusants, either men or women, as will abstaine from comming to Church or Divine Service, that will not first come to the Church and serve God: Prohibiting, in like sort, the said Recreations to any that, though conform in Religion, are not present in the Church at the Service of God, before their going to the said Recreations.

'Our pleasure likewise is That they to whom it belongeth in Office, shall present and sharpely punish all such as in abuse of this Our liberty, will use these exercises before the ends of all Divine Services for that day. And we likewise straightly command, that every person shall resort to his owne Parish Church to hear Divine Service, and

each Parish by itselfe to use the said Recreation after Divine Service.

'Prohibiting likewise any offensive weapons to bee carried or used in the said times of Recreations, And Our pleasure is That this, Our Declaration, shall bee published by order from the Bishop of the Diocesse, through all the Parish Churches, and that both Our Judges of Our Circuit, and Our Judges of Our Peace be informed thereof.

'Given at Our Mannour of Greenwich, the foure and twentieth day of May, in the sixteenth yeere of Our Raigne of England, France and Ireland, and of Scotland the one and fiftieth.'

According to Fuller, when James's Declaration came out, many looked on it 'not as locall for Lancashire, but what in processe of time would enlarge itself all over England.' This indicates that it was at first local in fact, if not in intention also.

It has been asserted on the authority of Wellwood, the annotator to Arthur Wilson's 'Life and Reign of James I.,' that it was ordered to be published in all the Churches in England. This does not appear in the Declaration itself, which, though directed 'to all Our subjects,' was to be published by 'the Bishop of that Diocesse,' meaning the Diocese of Chester, in which the county of Lancaster lay, nor was it at that time otherwise executed in fact.*

* Hallam's 'Constitutional History'; Collier's History.

Though it has often been asserted that the 'Book of Sports' commanded pastimes, it is clear that this is not the case, but that it simply allowed or encouraged them.* No doubt many of the Puritans at the time made capital out of the confusion, and human nature contains such a strong spice of obstinacy, that the legalization of an action is by itself often likely to discourage the pursuit of it when party spirit is concerned.

It is from Wilson that a story is derived to the effect that James on one occasion quarrelled with the Lord Mayor about the Sunday question. The King, wishing to move his Court on a Monday to Theobalds, sent forward his carriages the day before. Sir George Bolles, the Lord Mayor, hearing them rattling through the street on Sunday, sent and had them stopped, and only allowed them to proceed on receiving a warrant from the King. It is suggested that James was encouraged to publish the 'Book of Sports' to aid or justify his personal convenience in this matter. Wilson, however, was prejudiced against the King, and in his history he confuses the first issue with the reissue of that order, so utterly worthless is his testimony!

The words 'Canons of our Church' refer to those published in 1603, which excommunicated alike both those who impugned Church govern-

* See p. 36.

ment and those who presumed to establish new Churches or schisms. They directed the clergy to solemnly denounce recusants, to try to reclaim them from their errors, and to present them yearly, distinguishing the absolute from the half recusants.

Dr. Morton was the person principally concerned in drawing up the 'Book,' if it be true, as reported by his friend and biographer Barwick (and there is no reason to doubt it), that he told Barwick that he (Morton) composed six limitations to the license given, and the King added a seventh, saying that he would change the language from that of a priest to that of a King. Morton's composition begins with the words 'And likewise we barre.' The King was attended officially by Bishop Andrewes at this time, and Dean Hook suggests that he was perhaps consulted as well.*

Agreeably to his character as a moderate man, Morton steered carefully between the recusants on the one hand, and the Puritan, or person who abstained from coming to his parish church, but went to some favourite preacher instead, on the other.†

The attitude of James towards these two parties is curiously illustrated in a letter of February 14, 1604, written by an unknown hand to John Jegon, the Bishop of Norwich, and printed in Peck's

* 'Lives of the Archbishops.'
† Neal, vol. ii., p. 105.

'Desiderata Curiosa.' The writer says that 'on Saturday last, being the 9th of this present, there was a petition delivered to his Majesty by three or four knights of Northamptonshire in favour of the ministers which refuse subscription.'

On the next day (Sunday) the King sat in Council for eight hours on this question, and in the course of the discussion made the remarkable speech 'that his mother and he, from their cradles, had been haunted with a *puritan divell*, which he feared would not leave him to his grave; and that he would hazard his crowne but he would suppress those malicious spirits.' He next took up his parable against the Papists, declaring his utter 'detestation of their superstitious religion; and that he was so far from favouring it, as, if he thought his sonne and heir after him would give any tolleration thereunto, he would wish him fairly buried before his eyes.'

A sufficient explanation, if not justification of these words, is to be found in the insolence of the Scottish preachers to Mary Queen of Scots and James himself in his earlier days. In the 'Basilicon Doron' James, in a similar strain, bade his son Henry beware of Puritans, 'very pests to the Church and commonweal.'

Absence from service was at this time a statutory offence (23 Elizabeth), punishable by a fine of £20 per month, and imprisonment. Earlier in Eliza-

beth's reign the penalty of twelve pence for each omission had been imposed, but neither seems to have been much enforced, except from time to time for party purposes, especially against the Roman Catholics, against whom much of the Sunday legislation was aimed. In a debate in the Parliament (1620) Sir George Moore observed that in every Parliament since he had served there had been bills for observing the Sabbath.

Nevertheless, on finding the troubles he had raised, James, with his usual caution, withdrew the Declaration,* but too late to allay the storm. The Parliament was distinctly hostile to its spirit, and in 1620 (February 15) a Bill was introduced for the 'keeping of the Sabbath, otherwise called Sunday.'† During the debate a certain Mr. Sheppard asserted that the Bill had been wrongly named, 'for that everyone knew that the Sabbath was Saturday, wherefore it should have been intituled "An Act for the observing of Saturday, otherwise called Sunday." So much for the title. The body was no better than the head. This was an act made in the spite of the face and teeth of the King's Book, which allowed of dancing on the Sundays.' The temper of the House may be judged from its action. Sheppard was stopped, ordered to withdraw, and finally brought back on

* Fuller. † Cobbett.

his knees to the bar of the House and formally expelled.*

However, such was then the power of the King that a Parliament with strong views on the Sunday question, on receiving a message that some clauses n their Bill were contrary to the provisions of the 'Book of Sports,' meekly ordered them all to be expunged!

During the remainder of James's reign the 'Book of Sports' does not appear as a subject of the highest importance in the State, but religious and political differences were seething which were so closely connected with its principle that, however much it may have been forgotten in the interval, it was not destined to remain long in obscurity.

We shall here beg leave to make a digression, before entering on the events of the next reign, in order to discuss the popular amusements which were the subject of so much disputation.

* Mede's Letters; Harl. MSS.

CHAPTER IV.

SPORTS OF THE TIME, LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL. ARCHERY.

THE King's affection for hunting has been already remarked on, but his taste for sports was by no means confined to this amusement.* It will be observed that the first sport permitted in the 'Book' is dancing, a diversion which James was especially ready to encourage, as Buckingham, who was a very accomplished dancer, had recently brought it into great request at Court. This clause was particularly distasteful to the austere party, who gave the book the nickname of 'The Dancing Book';† and many of them would not have thought the words of Sanderson too strong, who declared later on that 'the people of Lancaster petitioned the King to be merry in breach of the law of God,

* Oldmixon, p. 46. The King was a great lover of sports.

† Nichols' 'Progresses.'

and all laws Divine and human since the possession of Christianity.'*

The encouragement of archery had been for many generations the traditional policy of the monarchs of England, for in earlier times it had been not so much an amusement as an essential part of the military training of the people, as many a field besides Cressy, Agincourt, and Poictiers bore witness. In 1363 this fact was so fully recognised that Edward III. commanded that archery should be practised on Sundays and holidays instead of the ordinary pastimes, and actually enforced this substitution by fines of one halfpenny for every offence, and imprisonment. The 'crack corps' (if we may use the term) of the Yeomen of the Guard, instituted in 1485 by Henry VIII. (himself an admirable bowman), were all archers. In fact, the special weapon in which the English then excelled was the longbow, and a little later the mere possession of a crossbow in a house subjected a man to the heavy penalty of a fine of £10.

The noble old ballad of 'Adam Bell,' the northern Robin Hood, quoted in Percy's 'Reliques,' shows how he and his trusty friends—Clym of the Clough and William of Cloudeslee—were invincible when armed with their good bows and strings of silk, until their arrows were exhausted. After

* Wilson, quoted by Oldmixon.

killing the King's men and the King's deer they go to Court and get absolution, and the King learns too late that they had just slain 'Three hundred men and mo'.'

The King then goes out with his best archers to see how these dangerous men could shoot ; and

'Then spake William of Cloudeslee :
"By him that for me died,
I hold hym never no good archar,
That shoteth at buttes so wyde."

'Wyllyam went into a fyeld,
And with him his two brethren :
There they set up two hasell Roddes
Twenty score paces betwene.'

William then cleaves the wand in two, and afterwards, like his namesake Tell, splits asunder with his arrow an apple placed on his son's head at six score paces. In return for this triumph of skill the King makes him chief rider over the North Country. The ballad ends with the pious wish :

'Thus endeth the lives of these good yemen,
God send them eternal Blysse ;
And all that with a hand-bowe shoteth :
That of heven may never mysse. Amen.'

Bishop Latimer, in his sixth sermon before King Edward VI., deplores the worst pursuits which had sprung up and supplanted the practice of archery in his day, and proceeds thus : 'In my time my poor father was as diligent to teach me to shoot as to learn me any other thing, and so I think other men did their children. He taught me how to

draw, how to lay my body in my bow, and not to draw with strength of arms, as divers other nations do, but with strength of the body. I had my bows bought me according to my age and strength; as I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger, for men shall never shoot well except they be brought up in it. It is a worthy game, a wholesome kind of exercise, and much commended in physic.'*

In and before the reign of Henry VIII. it was common for butts to be erected by the churchwardens in each parish, which the parishioners were directed to practise at after Sunday service, and the clergy often came with them and either joined in the sport themselves or countenanced it by their presence. The name 'butts' (*e.g.*, Brentford Butts and Newington Butts) still survives in numberless parishes throughout the country, marking the spot where archery was formerly practised. King James himself, in describing his own bringing up, tells us: 'I had my necessars honestly enough of my father for archery and goff; but not a purse for catch pull and tavern.'

The compulsory practice of archery had established, or at least encouraged, the habit of every man attending at his own parish church, the national duty of military exercise with fellow-townsmen being performed after the religious duties

* Quoted by Southey, 'Commonplace Book.'

were over. The idea of sects establishing chapels and ministers of their own, though it soon spread rapidly, was in the time of James I. scarcely even dreamt of, much less considered the best means of avoiding religious disputes.

The use of the longbow had been indeed compulsory on all able-bodied men, except judges and ecclesiastics, by Act of Parliament.*

In spite of the rapidity with which firearms superseded the use of the bow as a weapon of war, people were slow to recognise that the days of archery were over. In 1632 Charles I. issued a Commission, as his father had done before him, to survey all the archery-grounds within two miles of London, and to check incroachments upon them; and at the beginning of the Civil War the Earl of Essex even raised a company of archers for the King, but it must have been soon proved that the bow was obsolete, and we do not hear that the company gained any renown—at least, whilst so armed.

The proficiency which archers attained in Henry VIII.'s day may be judged from the fact that no man was allowed to shoot at a mark at a less distance than eleven score yards, whereas in 1737 the greatest distance was thirteen score yards, and the least about three score;† and rare indeed were the

* 33 Henry VIII., c. 16, intituled 'An Act for the maintaining artillery and the debarring of unlawful games.'

† Knight's 'London.'

men like Shallow's friend, old Double, who 'would have clapped the clout at twelve score, and carried you a forehand shaft a fourteen and fourteen and a half, that it would have done a man's heart good to see' ('2 King Henry IV.,' Act III., sc. ii.); and yet this was a great decline from the skill of William of Cloudeslee, if, indeed, the latter's deeds are not altogether a myth.

In the book known as 'Remembrancia,' containing records of the City of London, several notices are to be found of petitions in favour of this declining art. In December, 1604, the Bowyers and Fletchers complained of the injury their profession suffered from unlawful games played in common bowling-alleys under false pretences for maintaining the exercise of archery. Another petition, made by the longbow makers in 1627, states that in spite of the statutes their art daily declined, so that there were not above four of them left, and even they could find no apprentices to teach. The new science rose rapidly on the ruins of the dying one. The Artillery Company, which at this time used to meet at the Artillery Garden, Bishopsgate, in 1615, soon after its formation, was already 500 men strong, having more than doubled its numbers within a year.

The 'hand gun,' as it was called, which had been first used in war in this country in 1471, had developed in the reign of James I. into the weapon

called the 'caliver,' so named, according to an officer of that time, by a misconception of the meaning of the French 'calibre,' a French Prince having introduced the novelty of furnishing his men with guns of the same calibre, and the English having applied the word to the weapon itself. The fate of archery is satirized by Davenant in the following lines :

'Now lean Attorney that his cheese
Ne'er pared, nor verses took for fees,
And aged Proctor, that controls
The feats of Puck in Court of Pauls,
Do each with solemn oath agree
To meet in fields of Finsbury ;
With loins in canvass, bow-case tied,
Where arrows stick with mickle pride ;
With boots pinned up, and bow in hand,
All day most fiercely here they stand,
Like ghosts of Adam Bell and Clymme.
Sol sets, for fear they'll shoot at him.'

It is worth noting that while the 'Book of Sports' forbids the carrying of offensive weapons at the merry-makings, it expressly allows archery, which confirms what we have stated as to how greatly firearms had supplanted bows and arrows by that time.

May-Day Sports.

The custom to

'rise up early
To observe the rite of May'
(*Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV. i.),

by plucking the May blossoms with the dew still

fresh upon them, was even then a time-honoured prescription for good health, and the May games had many years before James's accession become established as amongst the most important of English festivities, and 'Bluff King Hal' himself in his younger days never failed to encourage them by his attendance in person. The Londoners took a special delight in Maying, a custom still commemorated there by the name of the Church of St. Andrew Undershaft, so called by the huge Maypole which formerly stood in front of it, and towered over it. The pole was painted with brilliant colours, covered with rings of flowers, and escorted by a gay procession to the place where it was to be hung with flags and solemnly set up, the one we have mentioned (called by one writer a 'stately cedar') being so long that it was drawn by forty yoke of oxen. This pole was set up after the Restoration, and three great lanthorns hung on it for the sailors to see, and to be lighted on all dark nights so long as the pole should stand. It was afterwards obtained by Sir I. Newton to support the then biggest telescope in the world at Wanstead Park. Lastly, a Lord and Lady of the May were chosen, and the dancing and other amusements began; and the revelry, commencing by the first rays of the sun, terminated in the blazing light of bonfires.

Maying was opposed by many of the fanatical

preachers who abounded in the first half of the seventeenth century, and was considered important enough for the Parliament in 1644 to order 'that all and singular Maypoles be taken down,' and it may well be imagined that for some years after this the sport could not safely be indulged in. At the Restoration, however, one of the solemnities of the re-inauguration of monarchy was the re-erection of the giant Maypole in the Strand,* amid the great rejoicings of all the neighbourhood. It need scarcely be observed that the people who went a-maying did not confine themselves to the amusements just mentioned, but many would fall to at quarter-staff, wrestling, broadsword and plenty of other pastimes, not even excepting the unlawful baiting of bears, of which we have soon to speak.

Fairs, Wakes, etc.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the fairs had declined from their former importance, when merchants from the principal cities of Europe attended them, but several of them were still very much frequented. In earlier times they had had their own Courts of Piepowder, or *pied poudre*, so called from the old French name for a pedlar, *pied puldreaux*, or dusty foot; these courts had jurisdiction over all contracts made during the fair The

* Knight's 'London.'

two great fairs at the beginning of Charles I.'s reign were Bartholomew Fair, held at Smithfield; and Stourbridge Fair, near Cambridge; and later on, that of Our Lady, at Southwark. The first of these was celebrated for its wrestling matches, and, while it was held, was the headquarters of the amusements of the Metropolis, so that, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the principal London theatres usually closed while it continued. Even under the Commonwealth it was not suppressed.

Stourbridge Fair was largely frequented by the more enterprising of the Cambridge undergraduates, in defiance of the authorities, so that, on July 23, 1604, King James put forth a proclamation similar in effect to the part of the 'Book of Sports' in which unlawful games are prohibited. It directed the Chancellor, and other authorities of the University, to 'wholly and altogether restraine, inhibit, and forbid, all, and all manner of, unprofitable or idle games, plays, or exercises, to be used or made within our said University, and the town there (and within five miles of either), especially bull-baiting, bear-baiting, common plays, public shews, interludes, comedies and tragedies in the English tongue, games at loggets, nine-holes, and all other sports and games whereby throngs, concourses, or multitudes are drawn together, or whereby the younger sorts are or may be drawn or

provoked to vain expense, loss of time, or corruption of manners;' and it was forbidden to set out or make any such unprofitable games or plays (saving 'the accustomed exercises of the students within their several colleges') under the penalty of imprisonment.*

At the wake, or dedication festival of a church, booths were erected, often in the churchyard (though this use of the churchyards had been frequently forbidden by Church Councils, beginning from the time of Edward I.), and a kind of fair was held.† Many of the churches being dedicated to the Holy Trinity, Trinity Sunday was the principal day throughout the country for holding these festivals. The intimate connection between the regular fairs and the Church festivals is shown by the fact that the word 'fair' is derived from the ecclesiastical term *feria*, a holiday. By Art. 88 of the Canons of 1603, it was ordered that the churchwardens or questmen, and their assistants, 'should suffer no plays, feasts, banquets, suppers, church-ales, drinkings, temporal courts, or leets, lay-juries, musters, or any other profane usage, to be kept in the church, chapel, or churchyard.' By the same Canons the ministers (Art. 64) were to declare on Sundays what were the holy days which fell in the ensuing week, and to endeavour to see that they

* Quoted in Walford's 'Fairs Past and Present.'
† Bourne, 'Antiq. Vulg.'

were observed. The observance of Church festivals was one of the most unpopular of the five articles imposed by James on the Scotch in his attempts at the reformation of their religious system in 1617.

Church ales were gatherings of the people after afternoon church, to drink ale and amuse themselves. Collections were commonly made on these occasions for church purposes, such as the decoration of the church with glass windows or bells, and for improving the building in other ways, such as the erection of towers. Clerk ales were minor church ales, and helped to maintain the parish clerks. 'People sent him provision, and came on Sundays to feast with him, by which he sold more ale. And since these have been put down, many ministers have complained to me that they are afraid they shall have no parish clerks' (Bishop Pierce's letter to King James I.). At the bride ales a bride used to sell ale, which her friends and relatives bought, so that she combined profit with amusement. The Bishop also mentions a bid ale (named from the bidding, or invitation), which was a benevolent Sunday feast where a poor man's friends contributed to set him up again.

The morrice dance, or morisco, was so called from its (supposed) Moorish origin, which is accepted by Mr. Douce in his notes to Shakespeare. The dancers blacked their faces to make them look like Moors, and accompanied their songs with

the castanets, and bells attached to their dress. It was traditionally said to have been introduced into the country by John of Gaunt, who brought it from Spain, but the authorities incline to think it came to England from the French or the Flemish. In its earlier days it was chiefly danced at Easter-tide, as the following couplet from a MS. of the fifteenth century suggests:

'At Paske began our Morrise, and ere Penticoste oure May,
Tho' Roben Hood, liell John, Friar Tuck, and Marian
deftly play.'

At a religious ceremony in Spain, exhibited on Corpus Christi Day, James's Ambassador, the Earl of Nottingham, attended, and a spectator records that there were among the parties to it eight giants and two Moors with tabor and pipe, playing, and he was scandalized by observing that 'the dragons, giants, and morrice-dancers paraded and danced in the very ranks of the friars' procession.'*

The morrice often formed part of the May games, and was also danced at Whitsuntide, and at bride ales, or weddings. Besides the above characters, the Queen of the May, the Fool, and the Hobby-horse, which was a man bearing a wicker frame with a horse's head and tail, who pranced about, were generally included in the company. It is recorded by Waldren that he saw a morrice-dance at Richmond in Surrey as late as the year 1783.

* Somers' Tracts.

It is well known that up to the latter end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth the floors of the houses were generally covered with rushes, a practice which conduces rather to warmth than cleanliness. Shakespeare in 'Romeo and Juliet' (Act I., sc. iv.) describes dancers as 'those who tickle the senseless rushes with their heels,' and Grumio, in 'The Taming of the Shrew' (Act IV., sc. i.), asking whether the house is in order, cries, 'Where's the cook? Is supper ready, the house trimmed, rushes strewed, cobwebs swept?' The vast number of rushes brought into London for such purposes became such a nuisance that as early as 1416 it had been ordered that all rushes laden in boats or skiffs, and brought to London for sale, should be sold by the cartload, and made up in the boats, not on the wharves near the Thames, under a heavy penalty, and again, in 1419, 'that the rishbotes at the Flete and elsewhere in London should be taken into the hands of the Chamberlain, and the Chamberlain should cause all the streets to be cleansed.'

An ancient custom, closely associated with morrice-dancing, is that of rushbearing, which was celebrated yearly in some parts of Lancashire, it is said since the time of Gregory IV. in the ninth century, in the following fashion. Rushes were heaped up in form of a pyramid on a cart, with a beautiful garland round the top of them: thirty or

forty young men decorated with coloured ribbons and flowers were harnessed to it in pairs, and performed a kind of morrice-dance at the inns at which they stopped in the journey round the town, jingling copper bells and stamping, and accompanied by music.

The rushes at the end of the day's performance were brought into a church and spread on the clay floor under the benches, to serve as a carpet for the congregation; the garland hung up in the chancel, or, if more than one, over the pews of the families who had presented them. In the churchwardens' accounts of St. Margaret's, Westminster, there figures the sum of thirteen shillings for twelve burden rushes for the White Hall (1515).

The custom is not yet extinct, and an illustration of the ceremony, as still performed by children at Grasmere, may be seen by those who can refer to the *Graphic* for June 22, 1889.

Morrice-dances were certainly sometimes performed on the Sunday, and in some churchwardens' accounts dated 1557, published in Coate's 'History of Reading,' we find the following item, referring to the dancers:

'Payed to them the Sonday after May Day 20d.'

We cannot forbear to quote a few more lines from the manuscript before referred to, showing the zeal with which the people had attached to every feast its own special ceremonies.

'At Baptis-day with ale and cakes, bout bonfires neighbours stood;
At Martlemas we burned a crabbe, and thilk told of Robin Hood,
Till after long time myrke, when blest were windowes, dores and lightes,
And pailes were fild, and hearthes were swept, gainst fairies, elves, and sprites;
Rock and Plow Monday gams sal gang with saint feasts and kirke fightes.'

Herrick, who, in spite of his preference for life in London, was perhaps the best student of country pastimes of all the contemporary poets, writing to a friend a description of country blessings,* thus enumerates them:

'For sports, for Pagentrie and Playes,
Thou hast thy Eves, and Holydayes;
On which the young men and maids meet,
To exercise their dancing feet:
Tripping the comely country round,
With Daffadils and Daisies crown'd.
Thy Wakes, thy Quintals, here thou hast,
Thy Maypoles too with garlands grac't:
Thy Morris-dance; thy Whitsun ale;
Thy Sheering feast, which never fail.'

These festivals, as we shall see, neither the eloquence of the Puritans nor the indignation of the judges was able to suppress.

In 'All's Well that Ends Well' (Act II., sc. ii.), the clown has an answer that will fit all questions, 'As fit as a pancake for Shrove Tuesday, or a morris for May day;' and in 'King Henry V.' (Act II., sc. iv.) the Dauphin urges his friends to

* 'Hesperides.'

go forth 'with no more show of fear than if they heard that England were busied with a Whitsun morris-dance.'

In Latimer's sermon quoted above he tells how he once came to a place to preach, and next morning, when he got to the church, expecting to find a great company, he found the door locked, and no one there. At last the clerk arrived, and said, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us; we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day. The parish is gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood.' The Bishop concludes good-humouredly, 'I thought my Rochet should have been regarded, but it would not serve; it was fain to give place to Robin Hood's men.'

During the troubles of the civil wars the 'wakes, fairs, and bear-baitings' ('Winter's Tale,' Act IV., Sc. iii.) greatly declined, except in the northern and midland counties, where wakes are even yet not extinct—at least, in the county of Stafford. The regret of the antiquary for their desuetude must be somewhat modified by the consideration of the extravagance with which they used often to be celebrated—which was so great that in some instances men would spend more money at a single wake than in all the year round besides. But even in the youth and vigour of Puritanism wakes found some champions among the clergy—witness one Giles Widdowes. In a sermon

preached at Carfolkes (Carfax) in Oxford, on Psalm lxviii. 25, 'he did avowedly justify the lawfulness of mixed dancing at church ales and maypoles upon the Lord's Day, and confirmed his doctrine by his own practise.'*

In Scotland such frivolities had been more effectually suppressed some years before this. In 1599 one David Wemis was imprisoned and compelled to apologize for the sin of dancing on Trinity Sunday. In his defence he shows that the new practice was not of very long standing. He observed that 'he never saw that dancing was stayit before, and that custom was kept in Raderny ere ony of the session was born.'†

Richard Baxter, in his 'Divine Appointment of the Lord's Day,' tells us: 'I have lived in my youth in many places where sometimes shows or uncouth spectacles have been their sports at certain seasons of the year, and sometimes morrice-dancings, and sometimes stage-plays, and sometimes wakes and revels.' He speaks sorrowfully of saints' days, and disparages the duty of observing them, as compared with that of resting on Sundays. He was fond of exercise, and speaks of himself as weakly in body, and unable to digest his food until he had done some hard out-of-doors work. Yet he was so strict that he declared he would not walk openly on

* The Stage condemn'd.'
† Cox's 'Sabbath Laws.'

Sunday for fear of tempting others. It never seems to have occurred to him that a good walk might benefit even a stronger digestion than his own.

The opinions of Baxter were, however, more moderate than those of the majority of his sect, and the amusements of the young, both in the country and in towns, were in that age rough enough and rude enough to raise a very natural antipathy in the mind of a sober divine.

Under the rule of the British Solomon the streets of London often presented scenes which that peaceable monarch must have heartily detested. Not to speak of the bands of profligates, whose brawling made it a by-word that 'a man could not go from the Rose Gardens to the Piazza once but he must venture his life twice,' the high spirits of the apprentices and their formidable numbers made street riots a constant occurrence, especially on holidays. In 1621 it was considered necessary to call out the trained bands and forbid the apprentices to go out on Shrove Tuesday, and similar precautions were taken on May Day in the following year. The playful spirits of the apprentices often vented themselves in an outbreak against some of the resident foreigners, resulting in complications very unpleasant to the King and his Ministers. One day a member of the suite of Gondomar, while riding through the streets, had

the misfortune to injure a boy by riding over him. A large mob speedily collected and assaulted the Spaniards; the Ambassador narrowly escaped with his life, and it required a force of 500 men to quell the angry mob. The French Ambassador was on another occasion outraged in a similar way, and in both cases the King was compelled to offer a most ample apology for the unfriendly conduct of his subjects. We learn from the Somers Tracts that private quarrels were nourished, especially between the Scots and English, and duels were maintained in every street. Numbers of young men who had ruined themselves went about in bands or 'sects' under the names of 'Roaring Boys,' 'Boneventors,' 'Bravadors,' or 'Quarterors,' whose infamous deeds were known to be secretly encouraged by some of the high nobility, so that 'scarce any durst walk the streets after nine at night.'

Bear and Bull Baiting.

It is difficult to say when bear and bull baiting were first introduced into England, but we know on very good authority that they were very popular in Norman times. Fitz-Stephen, who wrote in 1174, states that in the forenoon of every holiday during the winter season, the young Londoners were amused with bears opposed to each other in battle; or with bulls and full-grown bears, baited by dogs. By the time of Henry VIII. the taste for this

'sport' appears to have increased, and we learn from the writings of Erasmus that then many herds of bears were maintained in this country for baiting. The day generally selected for great spectacles of this kind was Sunday, as many contemporary references show.

In London the bear gardens were one of the sights which every countryman was bound to see, when on a visit. The two principal were the Old Bear Garden, the name of which still survives in a lane near Southwark Bridge, and afterwards the New or Paris Garden, also in Southwark.* The former was quite close to the Globe Theatre, and (*i.e.*, the building which went by that name) was a polygon of similar dimensions to the Globe; indeed, it is believed that the earliest theatres in this country were designed from structures built for bear-fighting.

The Paris Garden had formerly been the site of the Paris Manor-house, and was afterwards purchased by the Templars, who obtained the right of sanctuary for their precincts. The usual results of the right of sanctuary followed; the place became a regular Alsatia, or, as the phrase runs a perfect bear-garden, and under the Knights of St. John it did not improve in tone.

In Pennant's 'London' are some quaint doggerel stanzas by one Crowley, a poet, I was about to say,

* Stow's 'Annals,' Har. MSS. 454.

or a would-be poet, of Henry VIII's. reign,* describing the sport at the Paris Garden in the following terms :

'What folly this is to keep with danger
A great mastive dog, and fowle ouglie bear,
And to this end to see them two fight
With terrible tearings, a ful ouglie sight,
And methinks these men are most fools of al,
Whose store of money is but very smal,
And yet every Sunday they will surely spend
A penny or two, the bearwards living to mend.
At Paris Garden each Sunday a man shall not fail
To find two or three hundred for the Bearwards vail
An halfpenny a piece they use for to give,
When some have not more in their purses I believe,
Wel at the last day their conscience will declare,
That the poor ought to have al that they may spare :
If you therefore give to see a bear fight,
Be sure God his curse upon you will light.'

That baiting used to go on on Sundays, even after plays were forbidden, appears from the Black Book, 1604 : 'Well, still I waited for another fare, but then I bethought myself again that all the fares went by water—a Sundays—to the bear-baiting.'

In 1582, during one of the Sunday performances, some of the 'old and underpropped' scaffolding, supporting a number of spectators, of whom about a thousand were estimated to have been present, came suddenly down with a run, causing some deaths.

The Lord Mayor, in a letter to Lord Burleigh,

* J. Paine Collier's 'History of English Dramatic Poetry,' vol. iii.

attributed this accident to Sabbath-breaking, and the garden was consequently shut up for a time.*

In James I.'s reign the holders of the office of royal bearwarden, which dates from Richard III.'s time, were Henslow and Alleyne (both Shakespeare's fellows and members of the Globe Company), who rented the Paris Garden from the King (in 1617, at any rate) at £13 17s. In spite of its popularity it does not appear to have been very profitable, for they were compelled on one occasion to petition James for leave to bait bears, and they suggest that a baiting they had exhibited before him had made an end of four of their best bears, without sufficient recompense to make good the loss.

Besides the baiting, however, profits were made there out of plays and puppet-shows, and shows of another kind were to be seen there at times, for the grounds were used as an exercising place for the soldiers, to which fact Butler alludes in 'Hudibras,' when he says that one of his characters was

> 'Bred up where discipline most rare is,
> In military garden Paris.'

In 1642 the Parliament, as might be expected, suppressed the Paris Garden. Some years later his Majesty's bear-garden was transferred to Hockley-in-the-Hole, where it still existed in 1700,

* Strype's 'Annals,' iii. 140.

though in nothing but in name, being little more than a ground for prize-fights and other athletic exhibitions, but where, few will be sorry to learn, there was not a bear to be found.

Throughout 'Hudibras' the 'old way of re-creating, which learned butchers call bear-baiting,' plays a conspicuous part. Ralpho and Hudibras engage in a dialectical discussion as to its merits, in which the former shows it to be unlawful and carnal for various good reasons, the first being

> 'For certainly there's no such word,
> In all the Scripture on record;'

and elsewhere in the same poem it is called 'this lewd antichristian game'—a parody on the language of the Puritans, who strongly opposed that sport. For example, in Prynne's 'Histriomastix' it is asserted that 'those ought to be subject to six years' excommunication who carry about bears or such-like creatures for sport, to the hurt of simple people.' Ralpho in another passage urges that

> 'Synods are mystical bear-gardens
> Where elders, deputies, churchwardens,
> And other members of the Court,
> Manage the Babylonish sport.'

Celebrated bears are mentioned by their names by contemporary writers, and were evidently almost as well known to the public as modern race-horses; such were George Stone and Tom of Lincoln, and in the scene between Anne Page and Slender in

the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' (Act I., sc. i.), one of the well-known bears of the day is mentioned:

SLEN. Why do yon dogs bark so? be there bears i' the town?

ANNE. I think there are, sir; I heard them talked of.

SLEN. I love the sport well; but I shall as soon quarrel at it as any man in England. You are afraid if you see the bear loose, are you not?

ANNE. Ay, indeed, sir,

SLEN. That's meat and drink to me now: I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times, and have taken him by the chain; but, I warrant you, the women have so cried and shriek'd at it, that it passed—but women, indeed, cannot abide 'em; they are very ill-favoured, rough things.

An account of a bear fight may be seen in a pamphlet in the 'Harleian Miscellany' (vol. v., p. 188)—by those who care to read it—called the 'Parable of the Bear-baiting.'

A bear, when baited, was, of course, not free, but chained to a stake. In his struggles with the dogs a wounded bear would often break his chain, and this added greatly to the excitement of the contest.

We have already seen that James I. patronized the bear-garden. In this he only followed the lead of his immediate royal predecessor, who went when a Princess with her sister the Princess Mary to a bull-baiting, which they witnessed with great satisfaction.* Nor did Elizabeth give up this amusement in maturer years, for we learn on one occasion that 'To-morrow she hath commanded the bears, the bulls, and the ape to be baited in

* Wright's 'Manners in the Middle Ages.'

the tilt yard.'* Ignoble as this was, we may add that an even more abominable pastime was enjoyed by royalty at Whitsuntide, namely, watching the struggles of a blind bear, who was tied to a stake and whipped to afford mirth.

The rule of the Parliament checked, for a time, at least, the custom of bear-baiting. Certainly Cromwell did his best to put it down, as we learn from a contemporary letter that he did effectually in 1643 at Newark. Some bears had been brought over from abroad by Queen Henrietta, and left there, and afterwards brought into the towns on Sundays to be baited. But some of Colonel Cromwell's forces coming by accident into Uppingham town in Rutland, on the Lord's Day, found these bears playing there in the usual manner, and in the height of their sport caused them to be seized upon, tied to a tree, and shot. The same was done by Colonel Hewson when his regiment marched into London. When a bull was baited, a collar was fastened round his neck with a rope four or five yards long tied to a hook, which was fastened to a stake, that the animal might turn round. The dogs used were generally mastiffs, which crawled along the ground, keeping as low as possible, in order to seize the bull by the horns.

The Spaniards invited the Earl of Nottingham, our Ambassador to Spain, to a bull-fight. Four men were killed, and others sorely hurt. One of

* Sidney Letters.

his suite, who was present, observes rather mildly, that this was 'a sport, in my seeming, raising in troth more pittie than pleasure.'*

In spite of numerous prohibiting statutes, baiting continued to attract both high and low till the early part of the present century. In 1681 we find the Ambassador from Morocco and the Duke of Albemarle at a fight in the bear-garden at which several dogs were killed.

Both Pepys and Evelyn record their attendance at a baiting; the former gives us the following account of it (August 14, 1666):

'After dinner with my wife and Mercer to the bear-garden, where I have not been, I think, of many years, and saw some good sport of the bull's tossing of the dogs—one into the very boxes. But it is a very rude and nasty pleasure. We had a great many hectors in the same box with us, (and one very fine went into the pit, and played his dog for a wager, which was a strange sport for a gentleman,) where they drank wine, and drank Mercer's health first: which I pledged with my hat off.'

On which occasion the party finished off by going to Mrs. Mercer's, where they were mighty merry, smutting one another with candle-grease and soot, till most of them were like devils.

Evelyn's account is equally unfavourable:

'June 16, 1670. I went with some friends to

* Somers Tracts.

the bear-garden, where was cock-fighting, dog-fighting, beare and bull baiting, it being a famous day for all these butcherly sports, or rather barbarous cruelties. The bulls did exceedingly well, but the Irish wolfe-dog exceeded, which was a tall grey-hound, a stately creature indeede, who beat a cruell mastiff. One of the bulls tossed a dog full into a lady's lap, as she sat in one of the boxes at a considerable height from the arena. Two poore dogs were killed, and so all ended with the ape on horseback, and I most heartily weary of the rude and dirty pastime, which I had not seene, I think, in twenty years before.'

In the records of the county of Surrey it is stated that in 1671 a man was severely punished for bull-baiting, not on account of the cruelty of the sport, but because it was harvest-time, and he caused thereby 'divers labourers and other poore persons to leave their work.' In fact, it was not till many years later that public opinion really condemned this barbarism. About the beginning of the present century it began to die out; in 1819 it was rarely practised,* and by the Act of 3 and 4 William IV., c. 19, s. 28, penalties were again, and this time effectively, attached to bullock-hunting, and section 29 of the same Act declared that 'Whereas divers places in and about the Metropolis are kept and used for the purpose of fighting or baiting of

* Rees' 'Encyclopædia,' published at that date.

bears or other animals, at which places idle and disorderly persons commonly assemble, to the interruption of good order and the danger of the public peace; be it therefore enacted that any person who shall within five miles of Temple Bar keep or use, or shall act in the management or conducting of, any premises or place whatsoever for the purpose of fighting or baiting of bears, cock-fighting, baiting or fighting of badgers or other animals, shall on conviction thereof, before any one justice of the peace, forfeit any sum not exceeding five pounds, and in default of immediate payment shall be liable to be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for any time not exceeding two months, unless the said penalty shall be sooner paid.'

The decline of bear-baiting was contemporaneous with, and caused by the rise of, the theatre, in spite of efforts to maintain the sport. By an order of the Privy Council in July, 1591, plays were prohibited on Thursdays, because on that day bear-baiting and such-like pastimes had been usually practised, and an order was sent to the Lord Mayor, which recited that 'in divers places the players do use to recite their plays, to the great hurt and destruction of the game of bear-baiting and such-like pastimes, which are maintained for her Majesty's pleasure.'* So also in Scott's

* Nichols' 'Progresses'; Lecky, 'Hist. of European Morals.'

'Kenilworth' the Earl of Sussex is represented as showing the injury which the stage was doing to his favourite sport.

Interludes and Plays.

The prohibition of interludes on Sundays is probably intended to include stage-plays of every kind. At the same time it must be remembered that there was a distinct kind of play so called from very early times, and these deserve some attention from those who take an interest in the history of the English stage, as being the mediate or immediate progenitors of the drama proper.

The mediæval plays, though not approved of in rather later times by many of the clergy, were the foster-children of the Church, and were of three kinds: (1) The mystery (the term was not used in England), which took its characters, plot, and moral, such as they were, from Scripture direct; (2) the miracle-play, which was much akin to the above, but drew its story from the legends of the saints, which were adapted or dramatised with more freedom: they were exhibited in England soon after the Conquest;* (3) the morality or moral play, which aimed at teaching truth by allegory, and for this purpose used to introduce the virtues personified upon the stage.

The miracle-plays began in England soon after

* Percy's 'Reliques.'

1250, and were commonly acted either in a church or in the streets—in the latter case a scaffold on wheels was used, called a pageant, which the actors, who soon took to the stage as a profession, carried with them, even as late as Queen Elizabeth's time. Holinshed relates that at Queen Mary's coronation were exhibited pageants made by the Genoese, the Easterlings (Germans), and the Florentines, besides the important ones erected by the English, and in particular he mentions one shown at Paul's Gate, where the 'quæristers of Paul's played on vials and sung.'

James's arrival in England, on his accession, was celebrated with similar pomp in London. On May 15, 1603, 'the day for whose sake these wonders of wood clymde thus into clowdes,' says one of the Somers Tracts describing the scene, 'is now come; being so early up by reason of artificiall lights which wakened it, that the sunne overslept himself. The streets seemde to be paved with men; stalles, instead of rich wares, were set out with children; open casements fild up with women; all glass windowes taken downe.'

On this day the Italians' pageant took up the whole of Gracechurch (then called Gracious) Street, the lower part being a square adorned with four great columns—a structure nearer in size to a modern theatrical stage than to a mere puppet-show—as, indeed, the performances exhibited there

were more elaborate than the early plays we are speaking of.

In the moralities the principal characters were the Devil and Vice, whose *rôle* was to tease and plague the devil for the amusement and edification of the spectators. We have it on the authority of Strutt that the interlude, and sermonium, or secular play, was of greater antiquity than these religious plays, and that the latter were taken up by the ecclesiastics in order to make some of the gains which the strolling companies of tumblers, minstrels, actors, and jugglers used to make; but the fact seems to be that the earliest plays were of a mixed type. The players used to wander about the country, and perform at the various castles and seats of the nobility. Their object was mirth rather than decency, so that the clergy were forbidden to attend their plays, which they frequently very bitterly opposed. On the other hand, the secular players would at times poach on Scriptural subjects, and one such robbery caused the scholars of St. Paul's to petition Richard II. that they might be forbidden to prejudice the clergy by so doing. This was in 1378.

Numbers of these old plays were no doubt destroyed at the Reformation—for the destruction of books was not confined to those of a religious character. Many which escaped then were destroyed a little later, for in 1599 the books in

Stationers' Hall underwent a complete purgation. No satires or epigrams were henceforth to be printed, nor any plays without license, nor any 'English Historyes' (query, English historical plays) without leave from the Privy Council.

By an Act of 33 Henry VIII. secular plays, which were frequently acted, as Hume expresses it, 'in derision of the former superstitions,' were forbidden to be performed in the churches. I abbreviate Hall's account of an interlude of the later type played before Henry VIII. at Greenwich. The piece was a dialogue as to whether riches or love were most desirable: each disputant called in three knights to settle the dispute by a mimic fight. The battle over, there entered an 'olde man with a silver berd, and he concluded that love and riches bothe be necessary for princes, that is to say, by love to be obeyed and served, and with riches to reward his lovers and friends; and with this conclusion the dialogue ended.'

The simplicity of such plays as these was, however, rapidly developing into a real dramatic interest, gained by the introduction into them of historical characters, in place of the colourless abstractions of earlier days, the first writer of any repute who dealt entirely with real characters being John Heywood (died 1565), who wrote short farcical plays. A namesake of his, Thomas Heywood, in his 'Apology for Actors' (1612),

proudly traces the art of acting back to the time of Hercules, and asserts that in no country are actors of that eminence that ours are, in proof whereof he states that 'to this day in divers places of England there be towns that hold the privilege of their fairs and other charters by yearly stage-plays, as at Manningtree in Suffolk, Kendall in the north, and others.'

The early plays had been commonly acted on high procession days in the body of a church or cathedral by the inferior clergy, but secular plays were sometimes confined to the churchyard, as we know was the case at St. Katharine Cree's, where players paid a certain sum to the parish for leave to perform interludes in the churchyard. But when secular history supplanted Scriptural subjects the stage was soon transferred to permanent theatres. The great names of Marlowe, Peele, Greene and Nash show that Shakespeare was heralded by a burst of dramatic power, but the man in whom the old and the new plays most nearly united was John Lyly the euphuist (1554-1600), who wrote for the children of the Chapel and of St. Paul's prose plays full of a graceful and lively dialogue, even more florid than Shakespeare's. With the growth of Shakespeare's genius the old religious play waned and died, but it left one relic which survived almost into our own day, the Eton Montem, a festival derived from the old custom of choosing a boy-

bishop from among the children of a cathedral on St. Nicholas's Day. The scholars on these occasions migrated in solemn procession to a mount called the Salt Hill, and during the proceedings a large sum of money was collected, which was devoted to a scholarship at Cambridge for the senior boy.*

The rites connected with the appointment of the boy-bishop had in mediæval times been of a nature inexpressibly shocking to modern thought. The most favourable view of them shows us a gross parody of all the most sacred offices of the Church, performed in the consecrated building itself, and that, too, by a troop of children. The performance must have been considerably purified by the reign of Henry VIII., for we know that it was then so far respectable that Colet, the Dean of St. Paul's, ordered in his 'Statutes of St. Paul's School' that the scholars should come on the Holy Innocents' Day to St. Paul's Church 'to hear the childe bishop's sermon, and after be at high masse, and each of them offer a penny to the childe bishop.'†

Many years ago a statue was discovered in Salisbury Cathedral, representing a child in complete episcopal dress, several sizes too large for him. This was a great puzzle to the curious till it was discovered that this was an effigy of one of these boy-bishops.

* I am indebted for much of the information in this chapter to the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' ed. ix.

† William Hone's 'Ancient Mysteries described.'

This custom proves how thin a partition then divided the bounds of religious and secular plays, and shows how alien the later Puritan prohibition of Sunday amusements was from the spirit of an age when ribaldry in a church was countenanced by so able and venerable a dignitary as the founder of St. Paul's School.

Proceedings similar to the ceremony of the boy-bishop were at one time in existence in France under the name of the *Evêque des Fous*, in the course of which some of the songs which were sung were so scandalous, and the whole affair so irreverent, that they were at last suppressed by order.

In England, during certain festivals, especially at Christmas, mummers would go from house to house with their faces rubbed with paint or soot, and for these occasions were still allowed the liberty of speech in jest and song which can be traced to the old Roman Saturnalia, but 'painted visages' being prohibited in 1511, this licentiousness, natural to a ruder age, gradually disappeared.

The English have from the earliest times taken an especial pleasure in theatrical representations, and some authors have held that both France and Germany took them from our ancestors, who had enjoyed them at an earlier date than either of those countries.* It was not till Queen Elizabeth's reign

* Percy's 'Reliques.'

that plays were formally divided into Acts and Scenes, with a prologue. During a great part of that reign the playhouses were licensed to be open only on Sunday. So Stephen Gosson, in his 'Schoole of Abuse,' 1579, says of the players, 'These, because they are allowed to play every Sunday, make four or five Sundays at least every week.'

The records of the City of London mention a disturbance which occurred in the following year at a play on Sunday. The Lord Mayor, in consequence of this riot, forbade performances by players absolutely—but the Privy Council decided that they were lawful, not on the Sabbath, but only on the ordinary holidays, after evening prayer—so the Lord Mayor withdrew his prohibition, except as to the Sabbath day.*

The authorities in London had from early times consistently opposed the players, and in particular performances on Sunday, and these were again forbidden in 1581, but the constant repetition of these orders shows that they were not altogether effectual till some years later.

In his love for revels and plays, Charles I. resembled his father, and constantly had pieces played before him on a Sunday.

While he was staying at Oxford, in 1621, some university men (26th August) got up a play called

* 'Remembrancia, or Records of the City of London.'

'Marriage of Arts.' It fell rather flat, as it well might, for it consisted of five acts, full of undergraduate wit, seasoning a series of mild flirtations between the sciences personified. The fiasco gave rise to the following epigram:

> 'At Christchurch, "Marriage" done before the King,
> Least that those mates should want an offering,
> The King himself did offer—what, I pray?
> He offered twice or thrice to go away.'

Attempts were made in vain in 1619 and 1631, and again in 1633, to shut the Blackfriars Theatre, and stage-plays were prohibited on Sundays in the City of London several times between 1587 and 1625, yet constantly took place; but during the plague in London, in 1637, they were effectually suspended for a time.

The publication of the 'Book of Sports' encouraged plays to such an extent, that within two years after its republication over forty thousand were printed, and the author of 'The Stage Condemn'd' complained that 'Shackspeer's plays in particular were printed in the best paper.' That plays were still performed on Sundays in 1633 is indicated by Prynne's phrase ('Histriomastix') of 'a man trembling to be taken away suddenly (by death) from a stage-play on Sunday night.'

Under the Commonwealth the theatres were completely suppressed: it was ordered in August, 1642, 'that while these sad causes and set times of humiliation do continue, public stage-plays shall

cease to be forborne,' and in 1648 the magistrates were directed to treat all stage-players as rogues, and pull down all stage galleries, seats and boxes. The actors were treated with as little ceremony as their homes, and we find on one occasion the Parliament arresting the players at Salisbury Court and Drury Lane, and carrying them off the stage in their robes.* Indeed, during part of the time, especially about the year 1644, a time of national gloominess was practically decreed, and fasting and humiliation were enjoined nearly every week. But in spite of this prohibition, plays were frequently performed at noblemen's houses, and a considerable number were also published.

The Academic tone of the Oxford plays was indeed altogether too tame for their aristocratic audiences, for again in 1636 the play performed before the king was found again to be too full of moralizing. It was called 'Passions Calmed,' and is thus described in 'Wood's Annals': 'It was acted on a goodly stage, reaching from the upper end of the (Christchurch) Hall, almost to the hearth place, and had on it three or four openings on each side thereof, and partitions between them much resembling the desks or studies in a library, out of which the actors issued forth. The said partitions they could draw in and out at their pleasure upon a sudden, and thrust out new in their places,

* Rushworth.

according to the nature of the screen, whereon were represented churches, dwelling-houses, palaces, etc. . . . Many other fine pieces of work and landscapes did also appear at sundry openings thereof, and a chair also seen to come in without any visible help. All these representations, being the first (as I have been informed) that were used on the English stage, and therefore giving great content, I have been, therefore, the more punctual in describing them, to the end that posterity might know that what is now seen in the play-houses at London belonging to His Majesty, and the Duke of York, is originally due to the invention of Oxford scholars.' The queen was so much pleased with this performance, that she afterwards borrowed the 'cloathes and perspectives' for her own players. In a Sunday masque presented at Court the next year, by Inigo Jones, surveyor of H.M.'s works, and William Davenant (Shakespere's godson), and entitled 'Britannia Triumphans,' some ill-timed merriment was afforded by a character who appeared in a formal beard and steeple-crowned hat, under the name of 'Imposture.' It is worth noticing that this play is called 'extraordinary' as having been acted on the Sabbath day,* but this expression perhaps indicates rather what a Puritan writer thought it ought to be, than what it was in fact.

Prynne's 'Histriomastix' was dated 1633, but

* 'The Stage Condemn'd,' London, 1698.

published in 1632. At this time there were as many as nineteen theatres open in London. The prices were low, the cheapest seats ranging from a penny to sixpence; the 'twopenny gallery' is mentioned in the prologue to Beaumont and Fletcher's 'Woman Hater;' the best seats varied from two shillings to five, the usual price of the pit being a shilling. The house, about 1600, would open at three o'clock, and after the Restoration at one or two o'clock, the performance taking place in daylight, as Mr. Pepys tells us more than once. The politics of the stage have always been royalist, and in Henry VIII.'s reign interludes and plays had even been used by the Roman Catholics as a means of expressing their contempt for the Reformation, and they had therefore been forbidden for a time to be performed in the English tongue. During the Commonwealth the actors had been almost to a man malignants, and after the Restoration their zeal did not of course abate. When the theatres were reopened, the lack of players (many of the principal actors being now captains of military companies, or having been killed in the civil wars) caused women, who had already played in Court Masques, to appear for the first time on the English stage, the date fixed by Mr. Pepys for this event being January 3rd, 1659.

The simplicity of the earlier times had been content to strew the floor with rushes and make

shift for scenery with old tapestry and movable properties, such as rocks, steeples and trees, and to sit in buildings open to the air, except for an awning or 'heaven' over the stage: such was the Globe, where Shakespere himself had often played.

But the skill of Sir William Davenant and others soon enabled our countrymen to drink their wine or beer and smoke their pipes in buildings little less comfortable than our modern theatres, and to see plays presented with an art, in which, till recent years, succeeding generations have found little or nothing to excel that age.

Even in the last century the memory of the old religious plays seems to have not entirely disappeared. On the 6th of November, 1732, a play was performed at the Charterhouse, by the scholars, in memory of the gunpowder plot. The scene was the Vatican, and the *dramatis personæ* the Pope, the devil in the character of a pilgrim, and two Jesuits.

The following performance, of Queen Anne's time, of which Strutt has preserved the playbill,* can assuredly not be accused of want of variety.

BY HER MAJESTIE'S PERMITION.

At Heatly's booth, over against the Cross Daggers, next to Mr. Miller's booth during the time of Bartholomew fair, will be presented a little opera called *The Old Creation of the World* new revived, with the addition of the glorious

* 'Sports,' ed. 1776, vol. iii., p. 144.

battle obtained over the French and Spaniards by his grace the Duke of Marlborough.

The contents are these :

1st, The creation of Adam and Eve. (Then appear Cain, Abraham, Herod and others.) 14th, Rich Dives in Hell, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, seen in a most glorious object, all in machines descending in a throne, guarded with multitudes of angels ; with the breaking of the clouds, discovering the palace of the sun, in double and treble prospects, to the admiration of all the spectators—likewise several rich and large figures, which dances (sic) jiggs, sarabands, anticks and country dances between every act ; compleated with the merry humours of Sir Jno Spendall and Punchinello, with several other things never yet exposed.

Performed by Mat Heatley—Vivat Regina.

The force of nature can surely go no farther than this ; all histrionic performances that we have seen or heard of pale before this of the great Mat Heatley ; we will now take leave of the stage, leaving our readers rapt (we hope) in admiration at the genius of the man who could so wonderfully combine the Old and the New Testament, Marlborough's victory and the feats of the immortal Punchinello !

Bowling.

It will doubtless strike the reader as strange that bowling, the most harmless game conceivable, in itself, should be forbidden to 'the meaner sort of people,' but the early history of the game shows that in this country the idle and vicious classes had for many generations been addicted to it, and had

made gambling, drinking and swindling its ordinary accompaniments, to say nothing of quarrelling and murder. It had been in consequence forbidden by statute in 1477, in 1511, and at several other times; but the penalty was slight, and was little enforced. Both Charles I. and Archbishop Laud were very fond of it, so that Prynne says of the Archbishop that 'he used to play at bowles on this very day (Sunday)—a pretty Archiepiscopall Sabbath recreation.'* Laud defended himself by showing that it was well known to be one of the favourite Sunday amusements of the Church of Geneva. It is said that Knox, visiting Calvin on that day, found him engaged at it. From what we have said above, it is clear that the Scotch reformer would by no means have been so shocked at this as many people now would expect.

In the reign of Charles II. it was a favourite occupation for a party of gentlemen, especially when they were accompanied by ladies. Evelyn was playing the game on Winchelsea Green when he saw the vessel arrive which brought his wife back from France.† There are still bowling-greens in various parts of the country, which, could they speak, could tell of a continuous use from a much earlier time than this.

In an old book entitled 'Country Contentments'

* Cant. Doom., p. 153.
† 'Diary,' May 11, 1652.

an enthusiast speaks of the science of the game in these terms: 'In bowling a man shall finde greate art in choosing out his ground and presenting the winding, hanging, and many turning advantages of the same, whether it be in open field places or in close allies. And in this sport the chusing of the bowle is the greatest cunning, your flat bowls being the best for allies, your round byazed bowles for open grounds of advantage, and your round bowles like a ball for green swarthes that are plain and level.'

Besides the May games and other amusements which prevailed more or less over the greater part of the country, most of the principal towns had their own special games, in many cases of high antiquity. Such was the game called the Kyngham, which was maintained by the officers of the parish of Kingston in Surrey, who paid the expenses attending it, and accounted for the receipts. This game, as the subscription-lists show, was supported by the whole neighbourhood, and on its last reported occurrence the profits were as large as £91 10s. 6d. While the good people of Kingston thus spent their money on 'the taberare' and 'the lentare' who played at their own local festival, and paid for 'baking the Kyngham brede' and for the 'bering home of the geere after the Kyngham was don,' they none the less indulged in the extravagant sum of '3d. for 2 payre of glovys for Robin

Hode and Mayde Maryan,' to say nothing of fryers' coats of russet and white fustian coats 'spangelid,' with garters and bells for the morrice-dancers.

The records of Kingston contain many payments for performances by stage-players, jumbled up with receipts from Church ales and Easter plays, a somewhat startling item among the latter accounts being the following:

'For thred for the resurrection . . 1d.'

About the beginning of Charles I.'s reign we find the tide had turned, and instead of the payments for amusements, we see, *e.g.*:

'1625. Received for idle persons being absent from the Church on Sabbaths . . . 3s. 10d.;'

and three several times between 1621 and 1627 the sum of 10s. was paid to the king's players not to play in the town.*

Dry as these records may seem to be, they tell the history of the times in which they were written with a trustworthiness which is derived from the fact that they were generally jotted down as a mere matter of shillings and pence, and were not intended to support any principles of policy or justice. The prevalence of fanaticism before the beginning of the reign of Charles I., if it were not

* Anderson's 'History of Antiquities of Kingston-upon-Thames,' Kingston, 1818.

amply attested by other evidence, might be inferred from such entries in the baptismal registers as: '1617, Bestedfast Elyarde, or Goodgift Gynnings; in 1622, Lament Willard; or 1625, Faintnot Dighurst.'

It was the givers of such names as these who drove amusements from among their neighbours, and they did this so effectually that gaiety almost entirely disappeared until the day when General Monk decided that his best move would be the restoration of the monarchy.

CHAPTER V.

THE REISSUE OF THE DECLARATION BY CHARLES I.

ON his accession to the throne in 1625, Charles I. found himself in a position of very great difficulty. He was in need of large sums of money, which the Commons were determined he should not have. The Parliament first met in London, but was soon adjourned to Oxford on account of an outbreak of the plague, whither it presently followed them, and soon after the termination of the session its virulence compelled the university itself to break up for awhile.

The moderate and conciliatory address of the young king was coldly received, and only one-seventh of the money he required was voted. His needs were in consequence so pressing that he was forced to have recourse to loans varying in amount from 5s. to £20, to mortgage his Cornwall property to the London companies, put down the tables at

Court, and put the courtiers on board wages; and that, too, at a time when the country was so affluent that the Inns of Court could afford to spend £10,000 on a single masque.*

There was a fervent spirit of reform working in the assembly, especially directed against the Papists; and Charles, who had six months before bound himself by his marriage articles not to prosecute any of that sect on account of their religion, was constrained to enforce against them, by one of his first acts, the favourite Puritan doctrine of a strict observance of Sunday, at the same time destroying the relaxations permitted by his father; and this although the rift between king and people, which in 1633 incidentally produced the republication of King James's 'Book of Sports,' had already opened. But neither party could yet guess how wide it would soon be driven.

The Act, slightly abbreviated, runs as follows:

Anno Regni Caroli Regis Angliæ Scotiæ, Franciæ et Hiberniæ, primo.

At the Parliament begun at Westminster the eighteenth day of June Anno Dom. one thousand six hundred twenty five in the first year of the reign of our most gracious sovereign lord Charles, by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, etc. And

* Whitelocke's 'Memorials.'

there continued until the eleventh day of July following; and then adjourned until the first day of August following, unto Oxford; To the high pleasure of Almighty God, and to the wealpublick of this realm, were enacted as followeth.

CAP. I.

An act for punishing divers abuses committed on the Lord's day, called Sunday.

Forasmuch as there is nothing more acceptable to God than the true and sincere service and worship of Him, according to His holy will, and that the keeping of the Lord's day is a principal part of the true service of God, which in very many places of this realm hath been and now is profaned and neglected by a disorderly sort of people, in exercising and frequenting bear-baiting, bull-baiting, interludes, common plays and other unlawful exercises and pastimes upon the Lord's day; and for that many quarrels, bloodsheds and other great inconveniences have grown by the resort and concourse of people going out of their own parishes to such disordered and unlawful exercises and pastimes, neglecting divine service both in their own parishes and elsewhere; (2) be it enacted

There shall be no assemblies for unlawful pastimes upon the Lord's day.

by the king's most excellent majesty, the lords spiritual and temporal, and the commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after forty days next after the end of this session of parliament, there shall be no meetings, assemblies or concourse of people out of their own parishes on the Lord's day, within this realm of England or any of the dominions thereof, for any sports or pastimes whatever; (3) nor any bear-baiting, bull-baiting, interludes, common plays or other unlawful exercises and pastimes used by any person or persons within their own parishes; (4) and that every person or persons offending in any the premisses, shall forfeit for every offence three shillings four-pence, the same to be employed and converted to the use of the poor of the parish where such offence shall be committed,' etc.

Meetings and unlawful pastimes on the Lord's day forbidden.

In default of payment of the fine, the punishment was three hours in the stocks.

This Act is little more than a re-enactment of previous orders of the Privy Council, but it was more strongly enforced than they were, being very popular with the bulk of the Commons, whose influence was waxing day by day.

The Puritans were in fact determined to enforce their views on the whole nation, especially on the Papists, by reviving and carrying into effect the

most rigorous of the earlier laws against them. A specimen of the petitions with which the young King was besieged is the following :

XV. 'That the Statute of 1 Elizabeth for the payment of 12 pence every Sunday by such as shall be absent from divine service in the Church, without a lawful excuse, may be put in due execution, the rather for that the Penalty by Law is given to the Poor, and therefore not to be dispensed withal.'*

To this and to many similar petitions and Acts was the unhappy Charles compelled to consent, while his burden of debt remained as heavy as ever, in spite of his friendly overtures to the Commons. This soon led to that estrangement between King and People which nothing but death was to end, while its intermediate incidents were innovations in taxation, arbitrary imprisonment, and civil war.

The 'Book of Sports,' during the first few years of Charles I.'s reign, fades almost out of sight before the fierce light of the great constitutional questions that were being fought out ; but we may judge of the increasing tyranny of the Puritans from the above considerations, and from their efforts to abolish all the festivals of the Church, and even all amusements whatsoever, which many of them, in spite of the 'Book of Sports,' had forbidden their servants to attend on Sundays.†

* Kennet. † Harl. Misc., vol. v., p. 75.

One of the most notable of the Puritans, William Prynne, a barrister, in the year 1632, dedicated to the Benchers of Lincoln's Inn a work called 'Histriomastix (a scourge for players),' in the 1,000 pages of which invective, indecency, and learning are so jostled together that it is difficult to say which is the most striking. Ascribing the stage and all its works to the invention of the devil, Prynne attacked with equal fervour all who had any affection for, or interest in play-going, and by obvious implication among them his most Sacred Majesty and the Queen. He was tried for this publication before the High Commission, and in a great measure through the influence of Laud, whose innovations he had furiously assailed, he was condemned to stand in the pillory at Westminster and Cheapside, lose both his ears, pay £1,000 fine to the King, and be imprisoned for life.*

Prynne had his ears sewed on and they grew again, but he did not easily forget the debt he conceived that he owed to Laud, who, however, took no direct part in the Star Chamber proceedings against him, except by vote. This debt he repaid with interest when first the opportunity occurred.

In later years, however, he regretted the rashness and heat of his early writings, and lived to say that if the King had taken off his head, instead of his ears, he had done no more than justice.†

* Rushworth. † Nalson.

The 'Histriomastix' is certainly a striking proof to what depths of austerity and gloom Puritanism could descend. In this spirit he tells us that laughter is unseasonable, because this is no place, no time, no world for Christians to laugh, or be merry in, and we are admonished to behave like the ancient saints and martyrs, who never danced or amused themselves on Sundays, and again elsewhere we are taught that all good persons have opposed and prohibited plays and interludes, even from the days of Moses. The lawyers, though they did not formally censure the book, showed their opinion on its subject by the extraordinary expense with which they soon after furnished their great masque at Whitehall.

It was, as we have said, against the Roman Catholics that the new legislation was aimed. They had by an Act of Queen Elizabeth been made traitors and condemned to death for their belief, and the enactment of similar penalties against them had been a common incident in Parliamentary sessions ever since the accession of Elizabeth.

In 1624 both Houses petitioned James that all Jesuits and Papists should be expelled the kingdom, which he granted, though he shrewdly observed that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church, and that persecution only increased a religion.

In the following and in several later years the

House of Commons would take the sacrament on meeting, as a test against the presence of Papists.

Charles soon started on a career of high policy, as it was called, from which there was no retreat possible for so high-spirited a prince. It was a characteristic of his, that though, when he had made up his mind, he showed great tenacity of purpose in carrying out his desires, yet he frequently acted in a crisis on the suggestions of others. The removal of Buckingham by the hand of death in 1628, and the quarrels with Parliament over the Petition of Right and the Tonnage and Poundage had thrown him more and more into the arms of Laud, the man who had placed the crown on his head, and whose brain was hatching schemes for attaining the outward unity of the Church, which were as vast and difficult as the most sanguine of men have ever indulged in.

Laud's opinion on the Sabbath was displayed in action in 1629, when he had a quarrel with Richard Deane, the Lord Mayor, for prohibiting an apple-woman from selling her goods on that day in St. Paul's Churchyard, a difference which resulted in a good deal of angry letter-writing.

One branch of the new policy was the conciliation of the Catholics, with which object the Archbishop wrote* to the Bishop of Kilmore (perhaps amongst others), directing him to abstain from

* 1633.

exacting the statutory 12d. a Sunday from recusants who were absent from church, and informing him that the King ordered this 'for all the considerable reasons that may be.' A similar leniency was shown in the North of England, for instance, at York, until the arrival of Justice Vernon at the assizes. On hearing the energy that judge was displaying in enforcing the law, Strafford expressed an opinion that he ought to be had up before the Commission and tried for such conduct.*

Charles, who was married to a Roman Catholic wife, and had secretly agreed to bring up his children in that religion (to which both Charles II. and James II. were attached, and in which both died) was no doubt desirous to protect that sect as far as possible, though his affection for the Queen's French attendants was so far from enthusiasm that in 1626, irritated by their ceaseless intrigues, he packed them all off home, bag and baggage, in spite of the Queen's vehement opposition, and at no small risk of a war with France.

It is soon after Laud's appearance on the scene as the ruling power in ecclesiastical affairs that we find the Declaration again raised to be a question of the highest interest. There can be little doubt that this prelate was in a great measure responsible for the publication; its principles he himself admitted that he very much favoured. The occa-

* Strafford's Letters.

sion which gave rise to it was the following: The judges, who naturally saw the evils arising from festive meetings more strongly than their good results, had in the years 1595, 1599, and 1615, made orders designed to suppress 'unlawful assemblies of the people of sundry parishes into one parish on Sundays for amusement,' and in 1627 Barons Walter and Denham, at the Exeter Assizes, had directed that a similar order should be published, wherein it was declared amongst other things that alehouses were 'the seminary of the greatest mischiefs within this countrye.'

In 1632 the Lord Chief Justice Richardson and Baron Denham were on circuit in Somersetshire, where wakes and ales abounded, and took similar action with the general consent of the whole Bench, ordering that these festivities should be altogether suppressed.*

These festivities according to Prynne caused bastards, murthers, bloodsheds, drunkenness, quarrels, and other grave disorders.

This order, unpopular in itself, was not improved in the eyes of most of the clergy by the illegal direction it contained that they were to read it out in their churches, and it soon proved that the engineer was hoist with his own petard, though Richardson was supported by many of the Somersetshire

* Kennet, 'Par. Antiq.' ii. 309; 'Cant. Doom,' p. 128.

gentry whose names are quoted by Prynne ('Cant. Doom').

The Archbishop immediately complained to the King of Richardson's proceedings, and the King sent down to the local magistrates for a copy of the order, and in consequence Richardson was commanded to discharge the order at the next sessions,* in spite of his able pleading for it, in the course of which he produced six precedents for his action.

His answer, according to one version, was to confirm it with threats, by which great offence was caused in Somersetshire. Another is that he retracted, adding some remarks about 'some ill-affected persons who had misinformed his Majesty concerning it,' obviously aimed at Laud.†

The following is the text of the order which roused so much indignation: 'Whereas divers Orders have been made heretofore by the Judges of Assize, for the suppressing of all Ales and Revels, the same order is now confirmed at the Assizes and again ordered by the court in regard of the infinite number of inconveniences daily arising by means of Revels; that such Revels, Church-Ales, Clerk-Ales and all other Publick Ales be henceforth utterly suppressed, and to the end this may be observed, it is further ordered that the Clerk of the Assizes shall leave copies hereof with the Minister of every Parish within his

* 1633. † Rushworth.

several Hundred, and shall give a Note under his hand, that he shall publish it yearly within the Parish the 1st Sunday in February, and likewise the 2 Sundays before Easter yearly. And it is further ordered that every constable every Lent Assizes, present unto the Judges of the Circuit a note of the same Order under the hands of the said Ministers: and for the avoyding the concourse of idle people it is further ordered, that Minstrels and such other persons as usually carry up and down Bulls and Beares to bate (being Rogues by the Statute)* shall be punished as Rogues, for the further preventing of such inconveniences as usually hapeneth at such meetings.'

To settle the difficulty Laud, by direction of the King, wrote a letter, dated Lambeth, October 4th, 1633,† in which he speaks of the increase of 'Humourists banding themselves together against these feestes,' directing Pierce, the Bishop of Bath and Wells, to inquire into the management of the wakes and other festivals. Pierce chose what he called some of the better sort of clergy, but whom Prynne ('Cant. Doom') called 'the debcysest and worst in the country.' They were seventy-two in number, and so unanimous were they in their judgment that the delighted Pierce could only compare

* 1 Car. I., cap. 1.

† Calendar of State Papers for 1633, p. 231: Pierce's answer is p. 275, and the King's letter, p. 350.

them to the seventy-two translators who agreed so wonderfully in the composition of the Septuagint. These gentlemen, in November of the same year, certified under their hands 'that on the festivals (which commonly fell on the Sunday) Divine Service was most solemnly performed and the congregation fuller both in the forenoon and in the afternoon than upon any other Sunday; that the clergy desired they might be continued, and that the people in most places were of the same sentiment; they believed these annual solemnities serviceable for preserving the memory of the dedication of churches, for taking up differences by the meeting of friends, for cultivating a good correspondence among neighbours, and for refreshing the poor with the entertainments made upon those anniversaries.'* Pierce added that a venerable divine who lived near Taunton hoped the Archbishop would be a means that the judges might not sit and condemn men on that great feast day of the Annunciation.

In consequence of this judgment, Richardson, who had before been severely reprimanded at the meeting of the Privy Council, was compelled to reverse his order (he declared that he did so 'as much as in him lay'); and it was on this occasion that he made the well-known remark to the Earl of Dorset (while coming fresh from Laud's presence),

* Rushworth.

that he had been 'nearly choked by a pair of lawn sleeves.' Richardson, in spite of his enmity to Laud, retained his office till his death, in 1635.*

By way of counteracting the order issued by the judges to the clergy, the King ordered *his* declaration to be read in the churches on the 2nd of February in every year.

A petition of the justices in favour of Richardson's order was sent up to Prynne in London, but its presentation was prevented by Laud's energy, for in such haste was he to republish it, that he did not even wait for Pierce's reply before doing so.†

At Laud's trial the fourth charge on the thirteenth day brought against him was that he had published the 'Book of Recreations,' and the principal witness against him on this point was his old enemy, Prynne. His defence was rather a justification than a denial, and was that he had had the King's warrant for so doing, in the following words:

'Charles Rex.

Canterbury, see that our Declaration concerning Recreations on the Lord's Day after Evening Prayer be Printed.'

Prynne ('Cant. Doom,' p. 148) gives us the following note by Laud, of the causes of the publica-

* It is only fair to state that Laud (Works, iv. 133) denied that he was the cause of Richardson's suffering through the Wakes question.

† 'Cant. Doom.'

tion of the Declaration, which note Laud admitted to be his, but pleaded that it was written for his private use only :

1. 'A general superstitious opinion conceived of that day.

2. 'A book set out by Theophilus Brabourne (*sic*), 1618, "Judaism upon Christian Peoples" and perverted many.

3. 'A great distemper in Somersetshire, upon the forbidding of the Wakes, in the sourness of this opinion : An act of the Judge that rid that circuit, March 15, 1627, and followed by another, 1630; and his Majesty troubled with petitions and motions of some of the chief men in that county, on both sides.

4. 'His royal father's example upon the like occasions in Lancashire.'

We subjoin the 'King's Book of Sports,' as edited by Charles I. ; the words in brackets and the remarks which follow being added by the editor of the 'Book' in 1709, as a halfpenny pamphlet, badly printed and full of blunders, one being the substitution of 'immortal' for 'immoral.'

(THE BOOK OF SPORTS

as set forth by

K. CHARLES THE I.

with

REMARKS

upon the same)

LONDON:

Printed in the year MDCXXXIII. by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majesty, and by the Assignes of John Bill; (and now Reprinted in the Year 1709, and sold by J. Baker, at the Black Boy in Pater-Noster-Row

Price One Halfpenny).

'BY THE KING.

'Our Dear Father of blessed Memory in his return from Scotland, coming thro' Lancashire, found that his subjects were debarred from Lawful Recreations upon Sundays after Evening Prayers ended, and upon Holy Days: And he prudently considered, that if these Times were taken from them, the meaner sort who labour hard all the week should have no Recreations at all to refresh their Spirits. And after His Return He further saw, that His Loyal Subjects in all other parts of his Kingdom, did suffer in the same Degree: And did therefore in His Princely Wisdom publish a Declaration to all his loving Subjects concerning Lawful Sports to be used at such Times, which was printed and published by His Royal Commandment, in the Year 1618, in the Tenor which hereafter followeth.'

[Here follows the text of the Declaration (see page 29 above) with King Charles's Ratification, to which the editor of the halfpenny reprint has added the Remarks below, which conclude with a panegyric upon the virtues of Queen Anne, as com-

pared with all other contemporary Princes, which I have not considered worth retaining.]

'Now out of a like pious care for the Service of God and for Suppressing of any Humours that oppose Truth, and for the Ease, Comfort, and Recreation of our well deserving People, we do ratifie and publish this our blessed Father's Declaration: The rather because of late in some Counties of our Kingdom, we find that under pretence of taking away Abuses, there hath been a general Forbidding, not only of ordinary Meetings, but of the Feast of the Dedication of the Churches, commonly called Wakes. Now our express Will and Pleasure is, that these Feasts, with others, shall be observed, and that our Justices of the Peace, in their several Divisions, shall look to it, both that all disorders there may be prevented or punished, and that all Neighbourhood and Freedom, with manlike and lawful exercises be used. And we further command our Justices of Assize, in their several Circuits, to see that no man do trouble or molest any of our loyal and dutiful People for their Lawful Recreations, having first done their Duty to God, and continuing in Obedience to us and our Laws. And of this we command all our Judges Justices of the Peace, as well within Liberties as without, Mayors, Bayliffs, Constables and other Officers, to take notice of, and to see observed, as they tend to our Displeasure. And we farther will, that Publi-

cation of this our command be made by Order from the Bishops through all the Parish Churches of their several Dioceses respectively.

'Given at our Palace of Westminster the eighteenth Day of October in the ninth Year of our Reign.

'God save the King.'

REMARKS UPON THE 'BOOK OF SPORTS.'

'This Book has been so much bandy'd about formerly, both in Publick and Private Conversation and is so commonly still made the Subject of Popular discourse or Controversy between two contending Parties; being frequently banter'd, or branded, on the one hand, for establishing Iniquity by a Law, and as often also gravely justified on the other, with a serious Warmth, for allowing Innocent Recreations on Sundays; That it will require some sort of Moderation to reconcile Matters on Both Sides, and to set the Saddle on the right Horse (as we say) without giving any offence designedly to either. So I mean, as the Memory of King Charles the first may not be inconsiderately spatter'd, or traduc'd between Jest and Earnest, nor popularly inodiated by the rash Prejudices of a mistaken Zeal mutually engaged upon these affairs.

'Now this New Edition of the Book of Sports is as far from being designed to trump up any new Matter of Dispute between the Church and the Conventicle, as to give any Countenance to a Kind of Spiritual pastimes or what are called Lawful Recreations on the Lord's Day: For though I never could think Dancing, Cudgelling, Coaching, Tipling, Playing at Cards, or any other Gambling

Diversions proper for that sacred and solemn Day but as Prophane and Immortal (*sic*) on the Countray as ever any honest Dissenter has hitherto represented them to the World ; yet I must believe that the Church is in no wise concerned now-a-days, either for encouraging or tolerating any such scandalious Levities, Lewdness, or Libertinism by a Law : Surely no people of what Party or Persuasion soever in their right Wits, (except the Papists) would be for granting a License to Sin, or to break the Sabbath. But it is to be hoped that what Liberties of this kind have been formerly given may never be so allowed again by Royal Authority.'

The writer proceeds to describe the presentation of the petition of the people of Lancashire to King James I., and his publication of the Book of Sports in compliance with their request for liberty to amuse themselves on Sundays after the afternoon sermon. He continues as follows :

'But afterwards finding what good Effects the granting of these particular Privileges and Pastimes had upon many Papists in that County to bring them to Church, he was further encouraged to make the same Declaration of Sports Universal thro' the whole Kingdom; being chiefly moved thereunto for two very good Reasons, to the best of his Thinking of Prince-like Wisdom. The one was that the Prohibition of all lawful Recreations

or Exercises upon Sundays after all Divine Service being over in the Evening, would very much discourage at least, if not absolutely prevent, the Conversion of many well disposed Papists, and peradventure upon the very point of turning too at that time. . . . . For the other motive, He thought it an Impolitick Thing to debar the Common and Meaner Sort of People from using such Exercises as might make their bodies more able for War, when he or his Successors should have occasion to use them.'

Our author considers that 'the Declaration of Sport is a very favourable case on the King's side, for he was ill advised, though it ought not to be believed in Common Charity that ever an Archbishop had any hand in it,' yet they might 'put this "Book of Sports" in the Ballance now with the Liberties of later days,' (*i.e.* Queen Anne's) 'and compare it with Hackney Coaches driving on Sundays, Fitting out ships, Printing of News; and all as if it was the Old Game over again, the Better Day, the better Deed. And I have nothing farther to say towards moderating of Matters.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE RESULTS OF THE REISSUE.

DETERMINED to pursue the policy of 'Thorough,' Laud proceeded to enforce the clergy to read, and the clergy and people to obey the new edict, by penalties directed by himself, or the High Commission Court, against the recalcitrant. A Kentish minister, named Richard Culmer, a married man with seven small children, suspended with two others for refusing to read it, came to the Archbishop to beg for absolution. Laud's answer was: 'If you know not how to obey, I know not how to grant;' they were, therefore, suspended for three years and seven months, and the profits of their livings sequestered, a rigour which evoked much sympathy through the country for its unhappy victims. Our sympathy for Culmer is qualified by the fact that the aggressiveness of

his form of religion compelled him to such extremes as the destruction of the stained glass in his parish church. The extreme High Church Bishops encouraged the clergy to make returns of the names of the disobedient, the most severe being the Bishops of Norwich and Bath and Wells.

A story characteristic of the time is told of a preacher, who was suspected by the Bishop of London of an intention to indulge in some obnoxious political reflections in a sermon to be preached on a Church festival. The Bishop sent for him, asked what text he had selected, and significantly suggested that he had better let a more orthodox divine preach in his place. This he firmly refused. The sermon was preached on Galatians i. 6, 7: 'I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.' The preacher said not a word that the Bishop could take exception to, but concluded with the observation that these considerations might be applied by the congregation to the present state of politics, but that he had for excellent reasons refrained from doing so himself.

Prynne declared ('Cant. Doom') that Wren, the Bishop of Norwich, drove over 3,000 men to seek their living abroad, and the numbers of emigrants who left the country about this time show that the

statement is not without *some* foundation. The signs of Puritanism were so carefully sought out and punished that it is said that one Mr. Kendal, of Tuddington, was suspended in 1633 for preaching a sermon above an hour long. All this shows that those who refused to obey the order to read the 'Book of Sports,' were men who dared to accept a post of no small distinction from among their brethren, and even ran great danger of losing their livelihood.

Fuller relates with quiet satisfaction that a Western Bishop, a kinsman of his, refused to make out any list of the clergy who refused to read the Declaration.

In the abstract of the Archbishop's Metropolitical Visitation (1635), found in Laud's study by Prynne, is a note that Master Fairfax, curate of Rumborough, charged with inconformity, had faithfully promised to read the Declaration for lawful sports ('Canterburies' Doom'). Prynne, indeed, declares in this work, which is the history of Laud's trial, that many hundreds were suspended and otherwise punished for nonconformity; but it is impossible to accept unreservedly statements in this polemic which reflect on Laud. The text, or moral, on the title-page is Proverbs x. 7, 'The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot;' and in the course of the book it is pretty plainly indicated which of the two rôles

Prynne considered *he* played, and which the Archbishop played.

A treatise of Baxter's, on the Divine appointment of the Lord's Day, shows how the new policy affected some of the Puritans; his picture is the more effective, because so moderately worded.

'I cannot forget that in my youth in those late times, when we lost the labours of some of our conformable godly teachers for not reading publicly the Book of Sports and Dancing on the Lord's Days—one of my father's own tenants was the town piper, hired by the year (for many years together), and the place of the dancing assembly was not an hundred yards from our door, and we could not on the Lord's Day either read a chapter, or pray, or sing a psalm, or catechise, or instruct a servant, but with the noise of the pipe and tabor, and the shoutings in the street, continually in our ears, and even among a tractable people, we were the common scorn of all the rabble in the streets, and called Puritans, Precisians, and hypocrites, because we rather chose to read the Scriptures than to do as they did; (though there was no savour of Nonconformity in our family). And when the people by the book were allowed to play and dance out of public service-time, they could so hardly break off their sports, that many a time the reader was fain to stay till the piper and players would give over; and sometimes the morrice dancers

would come into the church in all the linen and scarfs, and antic dresses, with morrice bells jingling at their legs. And as soon as common-prayer was read did haste out presently to their play again.'

Baxter declared elsewhere that the King's motives were good, but the result bad in the then distempered state of public feeling.

In a letter written on December 6, 1633, by G. Garrard, a clergyman employed by Strafford to keep him supplied with news in Ireland, speaking of the Declaration to give liberty to servants, etc., as he terms it, he very justly says: 'Here begins to be much difference in opinion about the book; for though it be the same verbatim that was publish'd in King James's time, yet it is commanded to be read in all the churches here and in the Country.' He adds that it will shut the mouth of Richardson and others for the future.* Garrard is beyond doubt right in his estimation of the distinction between the two publications, by the fact that the one was compelled to be read in all the churches, the other not. It has been already mentioned that Charles's action in so directing was occasioned by the orders previously given by the judges.

'The effects of the "Book of Sports" at the end of two centuries are still visible in Lancashire, and there is scarcely a village in the county which does not exhibit symptoms of obedience to the injunction

* Strafford's Letters.

of honest recreation.' Such is the opinion of Dr. Whitaker,* but there are good grounds for believing that its success was not at first, at any rate, very great.†

We have mentioned that many of the clergy opposed its publication, as being unlawfully thrust upon them by the judges, and others as holding it unlawful in itself.

Among the latter was the Archbishop of Canterbury, Abbot, an honest but narrow-minded man, whose principal idea of religion, if Clarendon may be believed, was opposition to the Papists. On the day when the Declaration was first ordered to be read in the churches, he was at Croydon, where he refused to allow the officiating minister to read it. A story afterwards became current that he read it, and next read the fourth commandment, finishing off with the words, 'You have now heard the commands of God and man; obey which you please;' and this, if not true of him, certainly illustrates the attitude of the Puritan clergy towards it.‡ The history of Abbot is so strange that we may be pardoned for briefly alluding to it. In 1624 (July 22), while out hunting, he had had the misfortune to kill a keeper with his crossbow. He was tried for homicide, and acquitted, but his influence was gone, and the end of his public career was not

* 'History of Whalley,' quoted in Nichols' 'Progresses of King James I.,' vol. iii.

† Echard says the Declaration died of itself.

‡ The story is told of many others.

far off. In 1627 he was again tried before the High Commission* for refusing to license a sermon by a time-serving supporter of Charles I., a certain Dr. Sibthorpe, who had preached in favour of a new loan which that King was attempting to levy. Abbot was only too glad to escape with leave to retire to Guildford, where he spent the rest of his days, and founded a hospital, which still carries out the intention of its founder.†

Abbot was not alone in his opposition to the book; he was supported by some of the Bishops, and many of the inferior clergy. In the Diocese of Norwich, where it was the most severely enforced, no less than thirty ministers were excommunicated for refusing to read it, and yet Wren, the Bishop of Norwich, considered this a small number.‡ Neal mentions by name eleven others who were censured, suspended, deprived, or excommunicated for the same offence.

One Samuel Ward, for instance, preached in 1636 against the book, and in the course of his sermon declared that the Church of England was ready to ring changes in religion. For these two crimes he was suspended by the High Commission Court, and on his adding to these a third, by refusing to recant, he was committed to prison.

* Fuller says of this second trial, 'Vulnus Semel Sanatum novo vulnere recrudescit.'

† Cobbett's 'State Trials.'

‡ Neal, vol. ii.

Laud was himself milder than many of his party in the enforcement of the book upon the Puritans. At his trial he pleaded that in his own diocese he had only punished three persons for not reading it, and in these cases there was also a concurrence of other nonconformities. Snelling, who was suspended for not reading, pleaded that there was no penalty imposed by the Declaration. The Archbishop somewhat strangely inferred from this that his obedience and other men's should have been the more free and cheerful. His adversaries, however, imputed his inaction not to his charity, but to policy.*

It is difficult now to understand the violent hatred the 'Book of Sports' aroused among the precisians, unless we remember that those times did not understand the possibility of toleration, but held that a man must either force conformity upon his neighbour or be made to conform himself. A book had been published by one Dr. Bownd in 1595, advocating strong Sabbatarian doctrine, and though repressed by the authorities at first, it soon became immensely popular (by the way, he absolved gentlemen of quality from its severities), so that preachers went about asserting that working on Sundays was as bad as murder, and amusements were no better. The legalization of these amusements soon drove more men across the sea to

* Fuller, book xi.

Holland, who swelled the number of the emigrants to New Plymouth and other parts of America. There many of them gave rein to their fanaticism to such effect that in a draft of laws for Massachusetts, walking, cooking, riding, and many other of the natural needs of life were forbidden, and sports and recreations were punishable by a fine of 40s. and a public whipping, and in New England a woman might not even kiss her child on Sunday. In Virginia, where tobacco took the place of money as a medium of exchange, the fine imposed on absentees from church was 1 lb. of tobacco, and for slander of a clergyman 800 lb.; and it is curious to find innkeepers forbidden to charge more than 10 lb. for a dinner and 8 lb. for a gallon of strong ale.

Meanwhile, in England the mania for theological controversy found vent in a flood of writings, which were poured forth between the years 1630-1660, chiefly on the Sabbath question. The Declaration, it may be supposed, did not remain unsung, and while Puritans attacked it, Dr. Heylyn and Bishop Francis White, amongst others, wrote treatises in support of it, at Laud's request.*

Theophilus Bradburn,† mentioned in Laud's notes (p. 107, above), was a clergyman in Suffolk who rendered himself conspicuous among the numerous preachers who held the same opinions

* Hessey. † Fuller.

by publishing the above-mentioned Judaizing book on the Sabbath and dedicating it to the King.* He was rewarded by a prosecution before the High Commission, but thanks to the mediation of some of the Bishops, saved himself by a suspicious, but timely recantation. Dr. Pocklington, the author of a sermon preached in 1636, took the other side of the question, and therein showed more courage. He was deprived in 1641 for his offence and the book burnt, but he refused to eat his words, affirming that the only way he could translate *recanto* was to sing again!

The same controversy had been settled for a short time only in Holland by the Synod of Dort,† which decided that the Jewish Sabbath being abolished, Christians are obliged solemnly to keep holy the Lord's day; but this was only an incident in the dispute, which continued for a century longer in that country.

Peter Heylyn dedicated his book—a history of the Sabbath—to the King, and in it recommends obedience to the 'Book of Sports,' which in his dedication he observes justly deserves to be recorded amongst the principal monuments of Charles's zeal and piety, 'though its purpose had not found answerable entertainment.'

The episcopal writers were indeed more than a match in literary and logical skill for their op-

* 1632. † 1618.

ponents, though the latter numbered many able men among them. As a specimen from the less capable of the latter authors, we may quote some instances given in a 'Collection of Judgments upon Sabbath-breakers.' A man plays bowls on Sundays; he is in consequence killed by a blow from one of the bowls. Another is let down a well to clean it out for a Whitsun ale-brewing; the rope breaks and precipitates him to the bottom. Another tells us in the most positive manner how some fishermen of Berwick, relying on the 'Book of Sports,' had laid their salmon-nets on Sunday; they did not catch one fin, and not till they had gone through a course of prayer and fasting was their former plenty restored to them. Again, four others played football on Sunday, and were rewarded by falling through the ice and being all drowned. And so on.

Meanwhile the prosecutions of the ministers who refused to read the Declaration, though not very numerous,* continued, and such was their unpopularity that the Bishops were constrained to publish a defence of their conduct, in which they threw the responsibility on the King, of whom they represented themselves as merely agents, and bound to obedience as a soldier is, though he is not convinced of the justice of the war in which he is engaged. These reasons, however, fell short

* Collier.

of giving general satisfaction, and as acute a writer as Disraeli the elder held that this was not one of the least causes of the civil war among the populace. The sight of clergy—some men with families—suspended or deprived of their livings for refusing to read an unpopular order, and appealing in vain to Laud for mercy, was not likely to produce satisfactory results. These severities hastened the Archbishop's doom, being, as we have seen, charged against him at his trial. At the King's trial the 'Book of Sports' does not appear, the subject being merged in greater issues.

In the evasions from reading the Order, the characters and opinions of the various clergy come curiously to light: some obeyed, some refused altogether; some read, but preached fiercely against it when they had finished the reading, and some, with more ingenuity, declared that it was not their business, but that of the churchwardens, to read it. Many of the incidents in Macaulay's History, relative to the conduct of the clergy on receiving the order to read James II.'s 'Declaration of Indulgence,' read like a somewhat exaggerated account of the events of this time.

In Heylyn's 'Cyprianus Anglicus,' which was written as an answer to Prynne's 'Canterburie's Doom,' Bishop Pierce's seventy-two are praised as the most orthodox and ablest of the clergy, and the suggestion than the churchwardens ought to

read the Declaration is disposed of with the simple rejoinder that 'such silly villagers would often be unable to read.'

On the same authority we have it that the Bishops, combining the wisdom of serpents with the harmlessness of doves, first of all dealt with the refusers in a fatherly way, and wrote discourses to bring them round to orthodoxy, but this course failing, they sometimes added menaces to their persuasions, 'if they saw cause,' and afterwards went to work more roundly with them; so roundly, indeed, that in the words of Echard, 'the Book of Sports caused more specious ground of complaint against the King and the Archbishop, than any other part of the public Administration, as having such outward appearances of Irreligion and Prophaneness.'

Ere the outbreak of the Civil War all this was changed. The impeachments of Laud and Stafford were followed by the release of Prynne from his prison in Jersey, and by the enactment of numerous measures against the Papists, in the course of which Charles incurred much resentment for refusing to carry out all the rigours of the law against the Jesuit Goodman. During the year 1640 the Roman Catholics were hunted out and punished in London wherever they could be found, as appears, for instance, under this year in

the churchwardens' accounts of St. Margaret's, Westminster, from which we have already quoted.

'Paid to Justice Heywood's clerke, for writing out the recusants' names . . . . 2s. 6d.

Other sums are set down as received from divers parishioners for breach of the Sabbath.

It has been mentioned that at Laud's trial the publication of the book was one of the charges against him. He was accused of doing this to suppress afternoon sermons, with obliging the clergy of his diocese to read it in their pulpits, and with punishing those who refused. His answer was, that the sports were not allowed by the book till the service was over, and that he had only punished three or four.

To his plea of the King's warrant it was replied that the warrant was written in Laud's hand, which was itself a strong proof that he had procured it himself, and further that it was undated, and therefore had possibly been obtained *after* the prosecutions. Lastly, that some of the recreations allowed were unlawful on the Lord's Day, according to the opinion of some of the fathers, the councils and the imperial laws, and that the Archbishop was in the habit of Sabbath-breaking by sitting on that day at the Council-table. It had always been the custom of James I. (to go back no further) to hold his Councils on Sunday. For instance, the order for the arrest of Sir Giles Mompesson was issued

on that day, and it was on a Sunday that Bacon learnt that he was no longer Lord High Chancellor of England.

Laud had undoubtedly been condemned in the minds of the judges before the trial began; many of the accusations against him were felt rather than reasoned, and those which he refuted were lost in the mass of those to which his defence was doubtful. Even his enemies, however, were forced to admit that, like his royal master, he made a good end, and that in one sense, at least, nothing in his life became him like the leaving it. The vigour and brilliancy of his pleading at his trial were such as to change even the fury of Prynne into something very like admiration.

Passing over the military operations, with which we are not concerned, we find in the pages of Rushworth (vol. ii., p. 317), under date May 5, 1643,* 'It is this day ordered by the Lords and Commons in Parliament, that the book concerning the enjoying and tolerating† (enjoying and tolerating is good!) of sports upon the Lord's Day, be forthwith burned by the hand of the common hangman in Cheapside and other usual places,' on the ground that it was against the fourth commandment, and all persons having any of the

* The order is dated 3rd May in Cobbett's 'Parliamentary History.'

† See p. 41, above.

books mentioned were required to bring them upon the 10th May, at 12 o'clock, to be burned. The Sheriffs of London were ordered to assist effectually at the execution of this order, but there is no record of any penalty having been attached to disobedience to it. One writer adds to his account of this: 'But this book being almost forgot could not produce any great effects at the time I am speaking of.'

In spite of the violent conflict of opinions which then raged in politics and religion, a change in the treatment of dangerous authors was gradually working, by which the steady progress of civilization and humanity may still be traced. The author who in an earlier age had often paid for his temerity with his life was now punished by mutilation, imprisonment, the pillory, or heavy fines—a rigour which gradually relaxed into the infliction of a fine and a bonfire of the noxious books, which saved even the dullest of authors from the accusation of not having enough fire in his writings.

The fate of the 'Book of Sports' at the hands of the common hangman was shared by many famous volumes both before and after it. The first book printed by an Englishman which was thus publicly condemned was Tyndale's New Testament in English. The wholesale destruction of printed volumes reached its height during the reign of Mary; for though the reformers had been equally

zealous with their opponents in burning books, their rage was chiefly directed against illuminated missals and Popish manuscripts, which they carefully rooted out of most of the principal libraries.

Tyndale himself suffered martyrdom for having published the New Testament in the vulgar tongue. His brother, being convicted of reading it, was sentenced by Sir Thomas More to be thrown into a great fire at Cheapside with sheets of the book pinned on to his cloak, and to pay to the King a fine which should ruin him. The Pope Alexander VI. forbade any printer to publish a single book without the express license of his Archbishop. The penalty for reading Tyndale's New Testament was excommunication and death; and while the English Government burnt printers this side of the Channel, the Sorbonne did the same the other side. Between the Church and the printing-press there was, in fact, war to the knife; in the words of the Vicar of Croydon, 'We must root out printing, or printing will root out us.'*

But while this conflict was fiercest, the art of printing developed most rapidly, so that between 1500 and 1536 eighteen millions of volumes were published; the printers were victorious, and before long the Church had to fight with different weapons —that is to say, with the very weapons which had just been used against it.

* 'The Huguenots,' Samuel Smiles.

Queen Elizabeth had happily been trained by the party which was favourable to the liberty of the Press, and was, moreover, herself a scholar. The policy she adopted was not to interfere with the printers, except when they trespassed upon matters of statecraft. It was for such a transgression, for instance, that a book was burnt which was published towards the end of her reign by the Jesuit parsons and some others, entitled 'The Conference about the Succession to the Throne of England,' in which the authors suggested that the Infanta of Spain or the Earl of Essex instead of James should succeed on the death of Elizabeth. It was from this book that Milton drew many of the arguments employed in his celebrated 'Defensio Populi Anglicani,' and Bradshaw discussed its doctrines in his speech at the trial of Charles I.

In 1607 Dr. Cowel's Law Dictionary created a great stir by the obnoxious assertion that the King was not bound by the laws of the realm, but could pass what decrees he liked without the consent of Parliament. If he did consult it in matters of finance, this was as a favour, it was alleged, not as a right.

This daring assertion of the royal prerogative was punished by a short imprisonment of Dr. Cowel and the suppression of the book. The King's enemies at this time fared worse than did those of the Commons, for a certain John Traske,

a violent Sabbatarian, for writing an answer to the 'Book of Sports,' was pilloried at Westminster, whipped to the Fleet, and then imprisoned.

Yet perhaps even this was then considered but a mild punishment, for in 1619 one John Williams, a barrister, whose offence was having written two poems (which were never printed), was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, and, strangest of all, he allowed himself that the punishment was just.

Among the books burnt at the Restoration was Milton's 'Iconoclastes,' an answer to the celebrated 'Icon Basiliké'; but the poet was more fortunate than some less eminent offenders, being included in the Act of Indemnity which soon followed.

In 1703 the common hangman employed some of his valuable time in burning De Foe's satirical pamphlet, 'The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,' and a few years later Dr. Sacheverell's 'Sermons' followed suit. The last famous writing thus censured was Wilkes' *North Briton*, No. 45, which was burnt in 1762. The establishment of the liberty of the Press on a more solid basis gradually put an end to this ceremony, which had rightly come to be looked upon as little more than a solemn farce.

We have said enough to show that the severity shown against authors in King James's time may

be considered to be leniency in comparison with the sufferings they had endured not long before.

To return to our subject, in 1645 all saints' days were abolished by the Parliament,* amusements on the Sabbath (as might be expected) prohibited, and indeed all merriment attempted to be stopped; Christmas was turned into a time of fasting and humiliation for the sins of the people and their forefathers, and all signs of gaiety upon any feast-day severely censured by the Commons, the keeping of Christmas being a special mark of malignancy. Evelyn in 1652-55 found no sermon anywhere on Christmas Day, no church being permitted to be open, so observed it at home.

As proof of the way in which the Puritans objected to stated fasts we find Cromwell dining with the Lord Mayor on Ash Wednesday of the latter year. The accounts of the churchwardens of St. Margaret's, Westminster, preserve such items (for the year 1658) as payment to Richard May, for informing of one that played trap-ball on the Lord's day, and in 1648, 10s. from two butchers for riding out of town upon the Sabbath day.

During the Commonwealth, the Puritans revisited on their opponents' heads all the troubles they had themselves suffered; wakes and maypoles were suppressed, and the Counter Declaration against all Sunday pastimes was directed to be

* June, 1647.

published in all the parish churches; and even the very guardians of children under fourteen years of age, who disobeyed the edict, were fined twelve pence for every offence. The churches were either empty or the pulpits were filled with wordy mechanics, and in only one church in London was the English service kept up.* A penalty of £5 was enacted against the publication of any book encouraging sports on the Lord's day, and this muzzling of the Press, strange as it seems now, was no novelty to an age which had been accustomed to have no books published except such as were licensed by the King or a few specified Bishops and others.

At the Restoration the words of the ballad-writer were fulfilled, who had longed for the day when

> 'A hawk and a hound no longer
> Shall be tokens of disaffection;
> A cock fight shall cease,
> To be breach of the peace,
> And a horse race an insurrection.'

The old holidays were again restored to the people, who had had only the second Tuesday in every month granted them by the Parliament in exchange for the numerous saints' days they had lost.† Though with the Commonwealth Parliament working on Sunday had been almost as sinful as cheerfulness, the pressure of the State affairs

* Evelyn. † Whitelocke.

was so great at one time, that both Houses sat on that day on one occasion (7th August, 1641). They met at six o'clock in the morning, had a sermon, and returned at nine to their labours, sitting all day; but they thought fit to declare that this was only under circumstances of extreme necessity, and was not to be drawn into a precedent.*

The 'Book of Sports' continued from time to time to attract attention, and, as before, found plenty of opponents and defenders. The writer of one Queen Anne tract calls it 'a deliverance from the civil magistrate, who persecuted honest diversion on Sundays,' while another in 1711 held 'that the impiety of the day was due to the wicked Book of Sports, and that the great rebellion was merely the result of the Sabbath-breaking' of James I. and his son. A Scottish divine, Dr. Lorimer, attributes to the same cause the death of Charles I., and the failure of the Stuart line. In proof of these views it was urged by some that several of the principal battles in the Civil Wars, such as Edgehill, were fought on a Sunday. It is said that the Puritans sometimes chose this day for a battle the more effectually to show the Divine vengeance against the *Sabbath-breaking Royalists*.

It may fairly be maintained that the Declaration is both prudent in intention, and carefully guarded in expression; correctly distinguishing, according

* Rushworth, iii. 361.

to the law of the time, between lawful and unlawful amusements. It is true that these benefits are conditional on attendance at church, but that attendance was then the law of the land, and any interference with it might have raised no small tumult. It had been Elizabeth's policy to give the people amusements that they might be kept from prying into matters of State, and it is possible that James was not uninfluenced by the same motive. Enough has been said already to show that his natural temperament tended to gaiety and license, rather than gloom and severity.

This last cause must have had weight with Charles, whose early policy, guided by the master mind of Strafford and aided by Laud, was far more favourable to the Catholics, who in the war were almost all on his side, than to the Puritan party. It is natural, also, that he should have wished to uphold his father's decision, and grant to the common people that liberty which he always enjoyed himself, while at the same time he could give a slap in the face to some of the precisians, whose frankness of speech had sometimes not stopped short of insulting himself and his queen, for actions with which the revilers had little or no concern.

It has sometimes been averred that James had no right to issue a declaration on the subject; or that declarations have only a binding force when

grounded upon and enforcing the laws of the realm.* To the first it may be answered that in the indefinite state of the royal authority at the time, considering how great it had been a short time before, it is unfair to blame the King for using powers which, for all that anyone knew, he perhaps possessed. A servile Parliament in the reign of Henry VIII. had even gone so far as to enact that Royal Proclamations were to have the validity of Acts of Parliament! To the second, that the liberty granted was distinctly in accordance with the customs or common law of the realm, the amusements allowed by it being as decidedly lawful as the persecution prohibited by it was unlawful.

The conclusion of the whole matter we can hardly express better than in the words of Jeremy Taylor: 'As for some persons to give themselves great liberties of sport on that day is neither pious nor prudent, so to deny some to others is neither just nor charitable.'†

* Coke, 3 Inst., 162. † 'Doctor Dubitantium.'

THE END.

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